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February 2001

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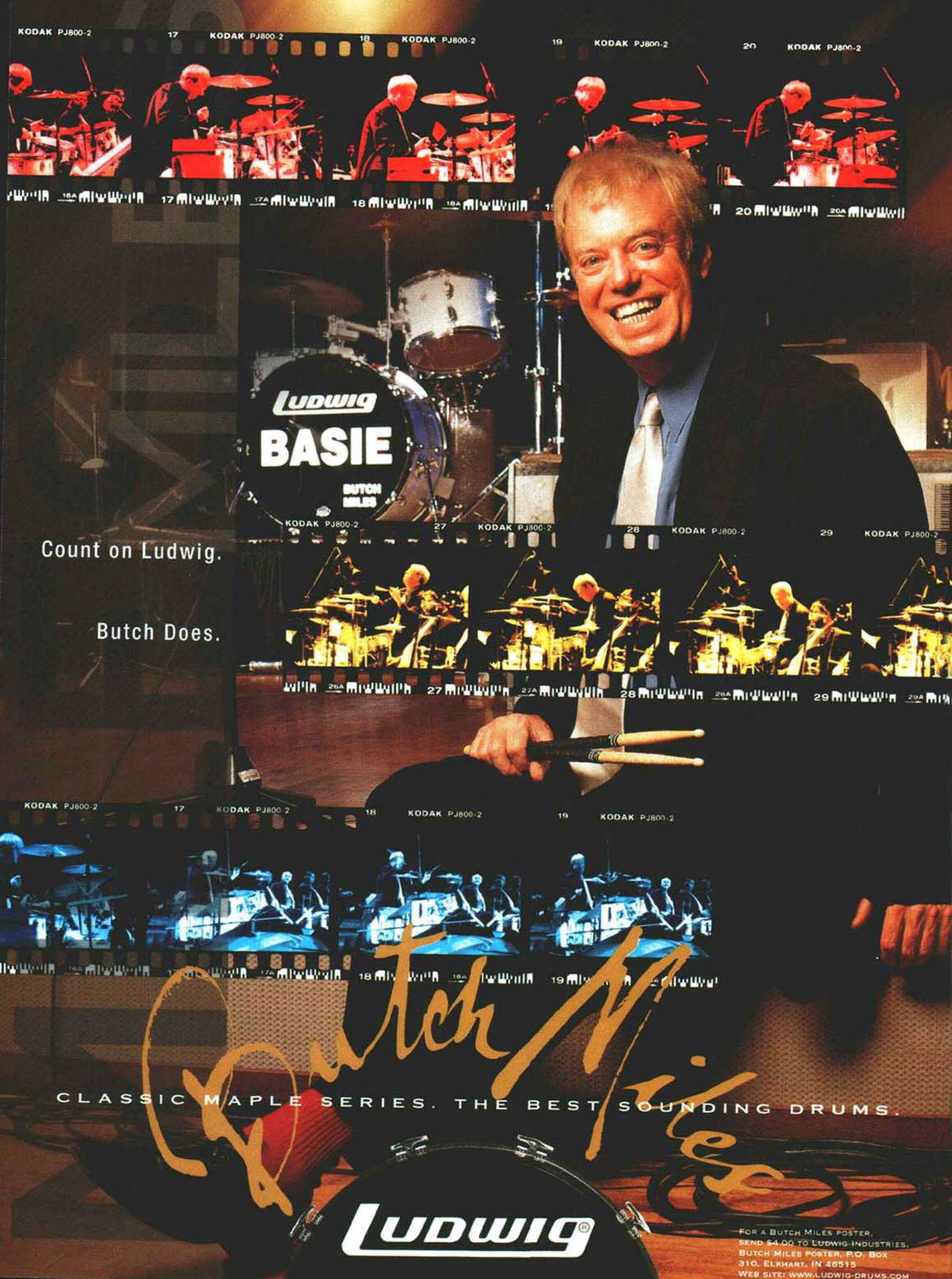
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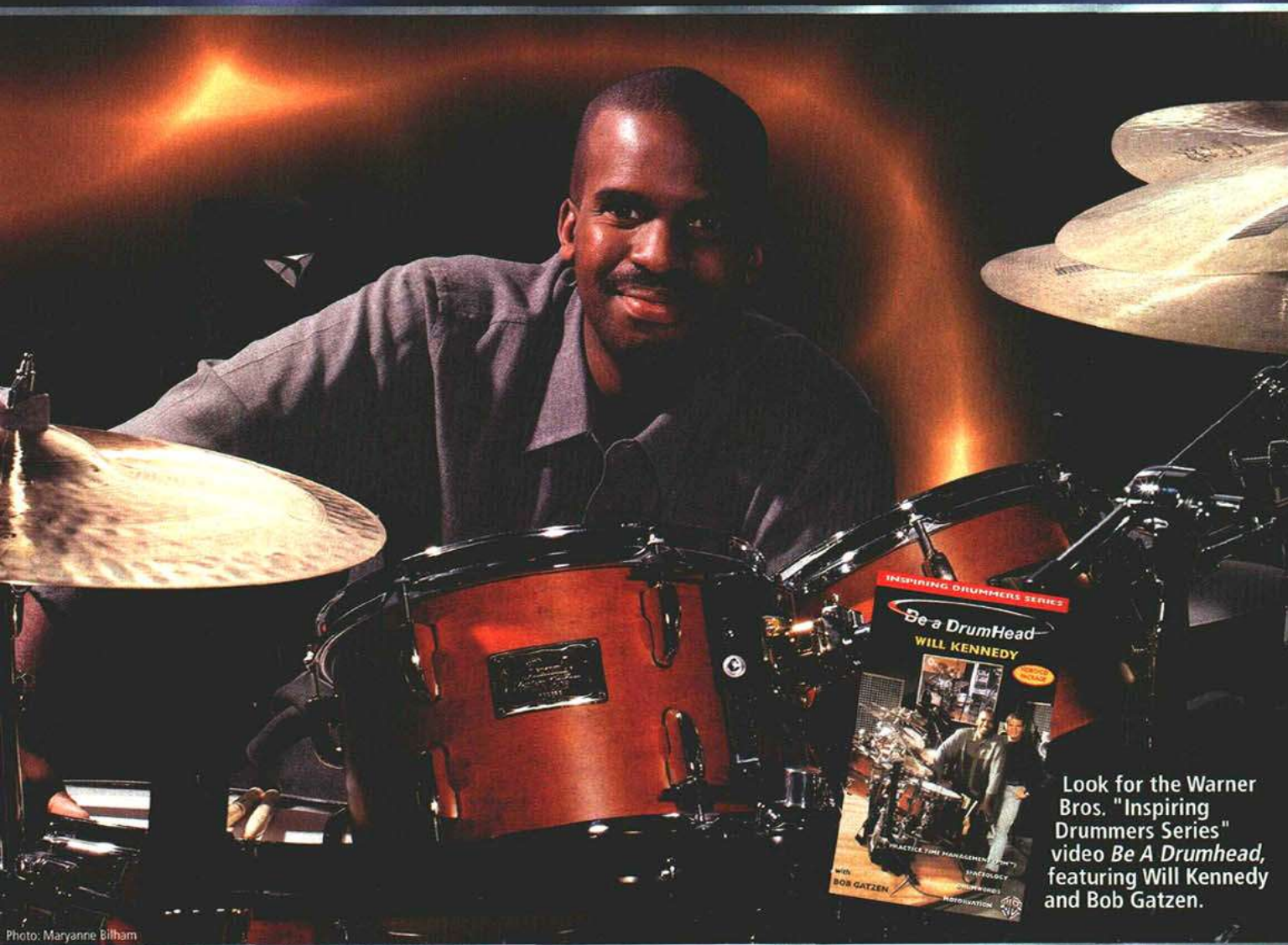

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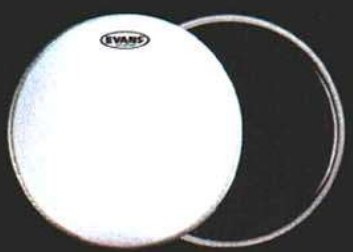

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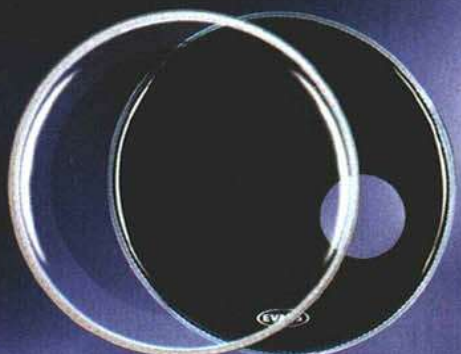

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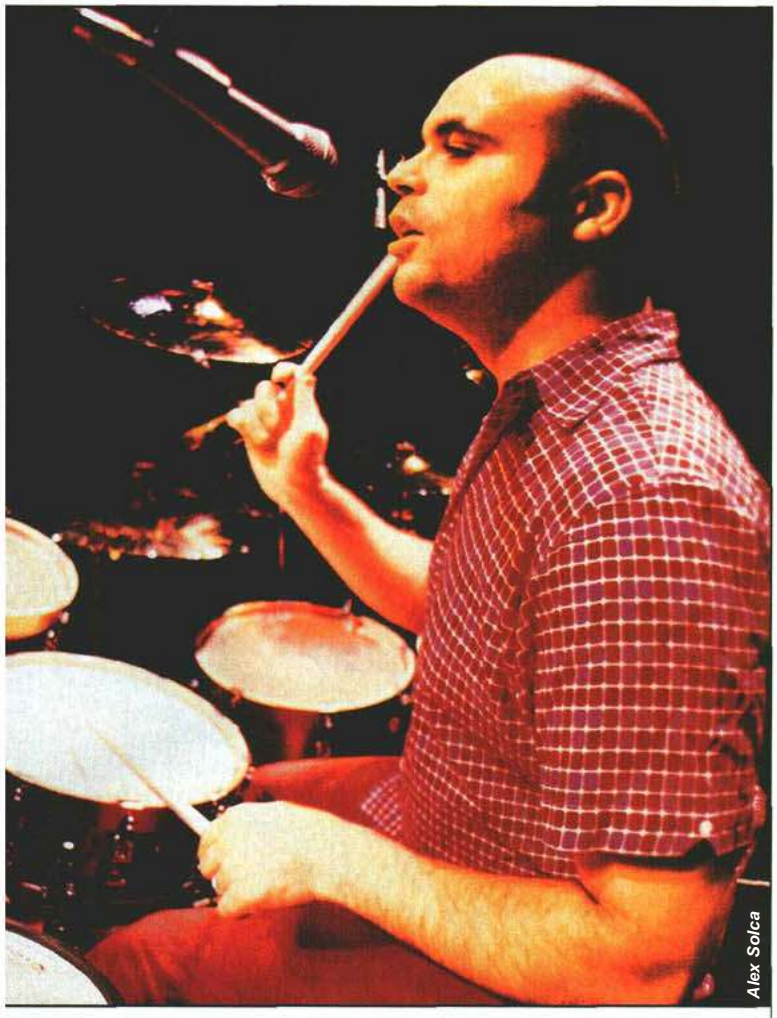
Alex Solca

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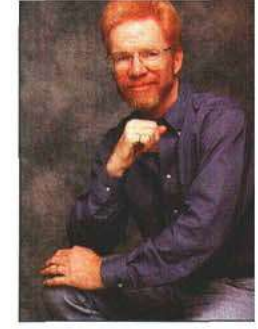

Broad Horizons

My drumming career has been a series of twists and turns. Sure, when I was a kid I wanted to be a rock 'n' roll star. I kept that dream going through all the bands I played with in my teenage years. But then I finished college and got married. For the first time, I found myself facing real-world problems—like rent, car payments, and medical bills.

So I scaled my dreams down, and focused on just being a working drummer. I went on the road with lounge acts and showbands. I also spent several years working in steady "house bands." I wasn't a rock star, but I was making a good living as a full-time musician.

My career took a *major* turn when I joined the *MD* staff in 1983. Since I now had a full-time day job, my outside drumming activities had to become part-time. Still, I was able to stay busy with "weekend bands" that played local clubs. Unfortunately, a combination of my ever-increasing *MD* schedule, along with the virtual demise of the local club scene, put a halt to my weekend warrior status about three years ago.

Happily, I found a new outlet for my drumming urges at about the same time. I started playing in the pit bands for local high-school and community-theater productions. It was quite a re-education! I had to brush up on my reading skills, which I hadn't needed for more than twenty years. I had to re-familiarize myself with percussion instruments I hadn't touched since high school. And I had to find ways of executing parts originally written for up to three separate players! It's been a challenge that I've enjoyed. (And it's proven financially lucrative, too.)

More recently, my career took yet another turn when I served as a faculty member at the 2000 KoSA International Percussion Workshop. I found myself in a "classroom" setting, offering advice and exchanging ideas with drummers of all ages and skill levels. It was a tremendous experience, and I'm looking forward to repeating it.

I still consider myself first and foremost a drummer. But along my convoluted career path I've also become a drum journalist, a pit percussionist, and an educator. I've authored a book about club drumming, and I've designed and created drum-related equipment.

The point is, there are lots of roads to take in the drumming world other than the "stardom or nothing" route. If you keep your options—and your mind—open, you can meet every challenge that life throws your way, without ever losing your drumming connection.

Now, if Charlie Watts will just retire, I can *still* become a rock star.

MODERN DRUMMER

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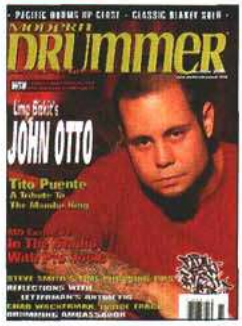
John Otto



As I tore away the protective plastic on my November 2000 *MD,* I saw who was featured as the cover story. Oh, great: another hard-hitting, muscle-pounding, heavy metal drummer. But I cracked open the magazine, and immediately saw some of the featured quotes taken from the article. I read one about how John Otto wanted to be just like jazz drummers, who could play any style of music. Being into jazz myself, I was flattered. As I skimmed through a little more, I began to realize how much knowledge and love John has for music. I was astounded!

I'd like to thank *Modern Drummer* for not only interviewing one of today's top drummers, but for opening my mind to different styles of music.

Charlie
Wheaton, IL

I must say, there's a lot more to John Otto than meets the ear. I was impressed with his dedication to his craft. John seems to really respect where his abilities come from. It made me think that there are a lot of misconceptions about the younger drummers in today's music.

Jon Pool
Monrovia, CA

It's refreshing to see that with all of the fortune and fame at such a young age, John Otto manages to keep a level head, and hasn't let his ego run wild. He is definitely a role model for younger drummers to admire and emulate—both for his amazing drumming abilities and his demeanor.

Just so you know, though, there was a mistake on the first page of the story. "Faith" was on *Three Dollar Bill Y'all,* not *Significant Other.* No biggie, though.

Pat Johnson
Atlanta, GA

Tito & Dom

I want to tell you how much I enjoyed Jim Payne's tribute to Tito Puente, along with Cheech Iero's profile of Dom Famularo, in your November issue. I was captivated by the way Jim laid out Tito's musical career from his childhood to his recent tragic passing. Tito's dedication and perseverance should be an inspiration to all drumset and percussion players.

And Dom Famularo! What he has accomplished is amazing. It's wonderful to see that he is still motivated by the love of his instrument and the joy of passing along his vast knowledge to his students.

Mike Padilla
via Internet

Dom Famularo is truly the drumming world's "Ambassador of Goodwill." I've come to know Dom over the past couple of years, and the guy never ceases to amaze me! He is an incredible human being, a phenomenal drummer, and an inspiration to us all.

Those who have not experienced the "Dominator" yet should put it on their list of things to do in 2001. He tours the world extensively doing drum clinics, where you can see and hear him speak and play, and

In Defense Of Zac

I just read the letter from Mark Petitta regarding Zac Hanson in November's *Readers' Platform.* Mr. Petitta seems to have.a serious case of "Zac" envy. I've seen Hanson live twice with my children, ages nine and twelve. For being twelve years old (at the time), Zac did much more than "barely cut it on stage." In my twenty-two-plus years in the music business, I've seen drummers three times his age who *did* "barely cut it on stage"—yet they were allowed their freedom of artistic expression. To say that Zac Hanson has no level of ability for artistic expression is not only deliberately hurtful to Zac, but also without merit. And if Dave, Virgil, Mike, and Rod had had records at age twelve, I'm sure we would have all welcomed their recordings with an open mind—something Mr. Petitta claims to have.

Ask anyone who knows me in this business, and they'll tell you that I'm one of the most humble people on the planet. But given the chance to meet Mr. Petitta, I would simply point to the multiple gold and platinum albums on my wall and ask him, "So, how many of these did *you* have at age twelve?"

Bruce Crump
drummer for Molly Hatchet, 1978-91
via Internet

I saw and heard Zac Hanson on Hanson's summer '98 tour, and again this past summer, with my daughter Molly. In '98 Zac knew about three beats, but this past summer's show was a real eye-opener. The guy had obviously been practicing. His beats and fills were varied and appropriate. He was strong, steady, and having a lot of fun. And he did it while singing at the same time. (Can you do that, Mr. Petitta?)

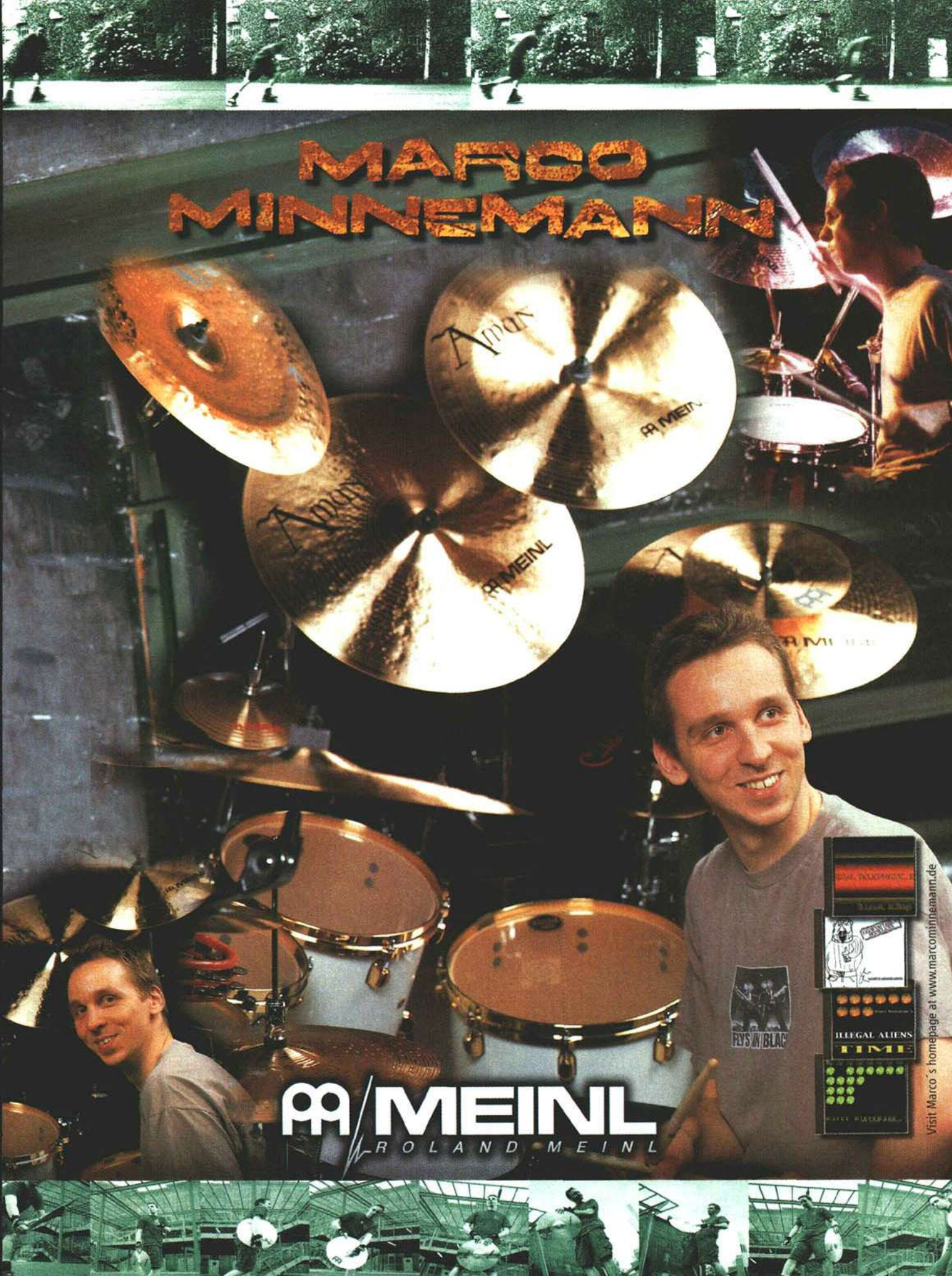
Zac came off in the *MD* interview as a fairly down-to-earth and humble guy. And the last time I checked, he wasn't hitting women or being thrown in jail. Perhaps Mr. Petitta should count his lucky stars that his kids are into Hanson. As Molly would say, "They rock."

Richard DeGraffenreid
Benicia, CA

My eight-year-old son has lived his whole life with my issues of *MD* available for his perusal. He has seen everybody from Steve Smith to Chad Smith to Smitty Smith—and they've meant less to him than "Snuffy Smith." This all changed when he saw Zac Hanson. A light inside him clicked on, and ever since then he spends his personal time poring over the pages of MD just like his dad.

I share this story with you as my way of saying thanks, and to congratulate you on seeing drumming as more than just paradiddles and polyrhythms. With your story on Zac you grasped the notion of heart, recognizing the contribution and impact that one young drummer might have on another. You showed your understanding that some of your readership is made up of eight-year-old drummers who are looking for their Ringo.

Thomas J. Huber
via Internet,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can usually get to meet him after the show. He's a great guy to talk to.

Phil Catalano
Colorado Springs, CO

Authentic Latin Styles

I respect Rob Leytham for being open to incorporating Latin rhythms into his teachings. But in his November 2000 *Latin Symposium* article, "Creating A Vocabulary, Part 1: The Mozambique And Rolls," he describes an exercise using the mozambique along with five- and six-stroke rolls. In his last paragraph he says, "You can create a samba feel by adding the optional bass drum on the 'ahs'...." Could Mr. Leytham please explain to me what the "samba" and the "mozambique" have to do with each other, except that both are Latin-American rhythms that come from African influences?

It upsets me when American musicians refer to Latin grooves without really knowing what they're talking about. For Americans, any syncopated rhythm that comes from South America is the same. I'm pretty sure that if I wrote an article about jazz rhythms, and later on I stated, "Notice how my feet are playing a funk bass-drum pattern," I'd have American drummers jumping on me for not using the correct terms for the specific rhythms.

Please don't consider my letter as a reprimand. I congratulate Mr. Leytham for trying to incorporate more musical language into his own playing, and passing that on to his students. But a little bit of investigation wouldn't hurt anybody. Please check Ed Uribes's book, *The Essence Of Afro-Cuban Percussion & Drum Set,* for a real definition of a mozambique rhythm.

Jose R. Duque
via Internet

Drumming In The Real World

In reference to William F. Miller's November *Editor's Overview* about listening to live performances: I was in a slump with my playing. I was practicing and gigging regularly, but I was missing that "gut fire" I'd had just a few months previously. Then I attended a concert by the great Tower Of Power. It was just what the doctor ordered. The opening band was smokin', then T.O.P. came on stage and proceeded to tear the place apart. David Garibaldi was totally incredible.

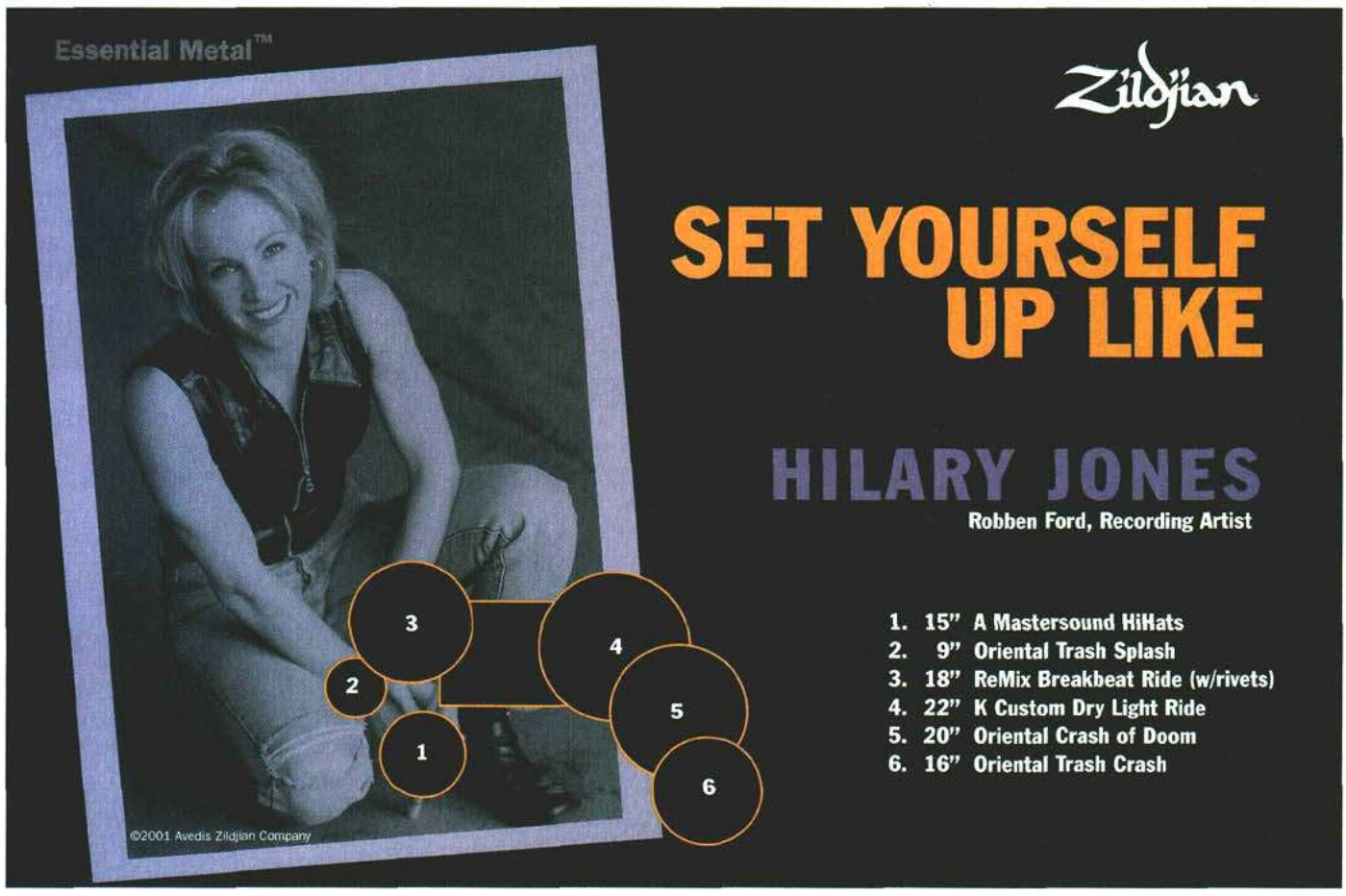
I left the show feeling inspired. My next few practices, band rehearsals, and gigs took a major turn for the better. Bill was right. "Watching and listening to someone perform live is really what it's all about." The price to see such a powerful show is minimal compared to the return.

Gerald R. Rodriguez
via Internet

In Defense Of Cindy

Cindy Blackman has never failed to inspire and amaze me. I would advise all *MD* readers to take James Dugan's negative criticism [November 2000 *Readers' Platform]* with his own "boulder of salt." Highly opinionated people who publicly put down established professional artists usually lack an appreciation or understanding of those artists' particular style or approach. They routinely reject potential source material due to closed-mindedness, preferring to stick to the familiar, thereby diminishing their own growth. Attributing any success or good reputation solely to "industry hype" sounds like sour grapes—a way of feeling better at someone else's expense.

I implore the music community to keep their minds open and their mouths shut, saving their energy toward finding the "figures



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(we) could only dream of pulling off and applying them as musically as possible.

Rick Shandling
Highland Park, IL

Skynyrd Correction

In the October 2000 *Reflections,* Vinnie Paul referred to Artimus Pyle as the original Lynyrd Skynyrd drummer. Actually, Bob Burns played on the first two albums. Bob created the drum parts for several of the band's most famous songs, including "Free Bird," "Tuesday's Gone," and "Sweet Home Alabama."

Bob Burns is one of my favorite drummers. I really like his touch on the kit. So I just wanted to set the record straight. Thanks for a great magazine.

Bob Pettit
Corvallis, OR

Fitting The Big Guys

Why don't drum companies and magazines offer their clothing in bigger sizes? I am a 300-pound drummer who'd like nothing better than to wear clothes from my favorite drum company or drum magazine to show the world what I love to do. Besides, wouldn't you like to see your company's name on a billboard instead of something nailed to a pole?

Bigger is better. I don't mind paying a little extra for my bigger clothes; I have to do it all the time. I'm just asking for some consideration for the larger drummers of the world.

Bill Lichtsinn
via Internet

Thanks For The Help

I'd been a drummer since the age of ten, but marriage, kids, and career put drumming on hold for a time. In fact, I sold my beloved Quadra-Plus set to afford a down payment on a house. But after spending twenty years devoting my time and energy to family and career, I picked up a copy of *Modern Drummer* a few months ago.

After getting back in the know through your magazine, I set out to build the set I've wanted since I was a kid. Fortunately, here in Indianapolis we have the Drum Center. I went to see what they had in stock, and thanks to *MD* contributor Harry Cangany and his great staff, I walked out with a Tama Starclassic set that will serve as the foundation for my ultimate setup. I emailed Harry to tell him how much I appreciated doing business with him and how happy I was with the drums. His response was, "We're just drummers helping drummers."

This is not an advertisement for the Drum Center, just a note of appreciation for that kind of business attitude. The passion for playing is alive and well in this forty-four-year-old, and that's really what it's all about. *Modern Drummer,* Harry Cangany, and Tama Drums all have a new friend. Keep the great articles coming; I've got a lot of catching up to do!

Chris Jensen
Indianapolis, IN

ERRATA

Credit for the photos of Paul Doucette in the December 2000 *MD* were inadvertently omitted. The photographer was James Minchin.

How To Reach Us

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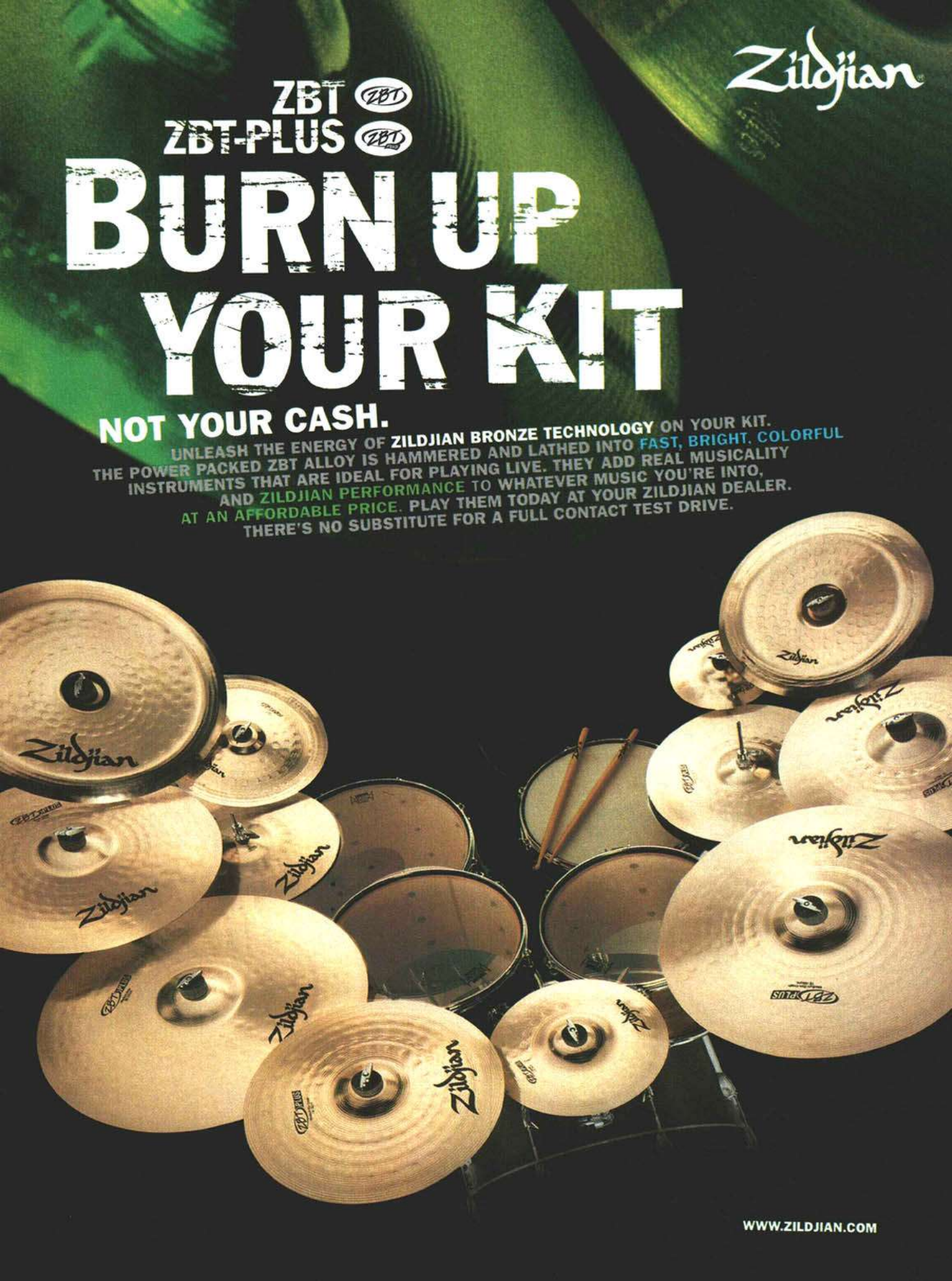
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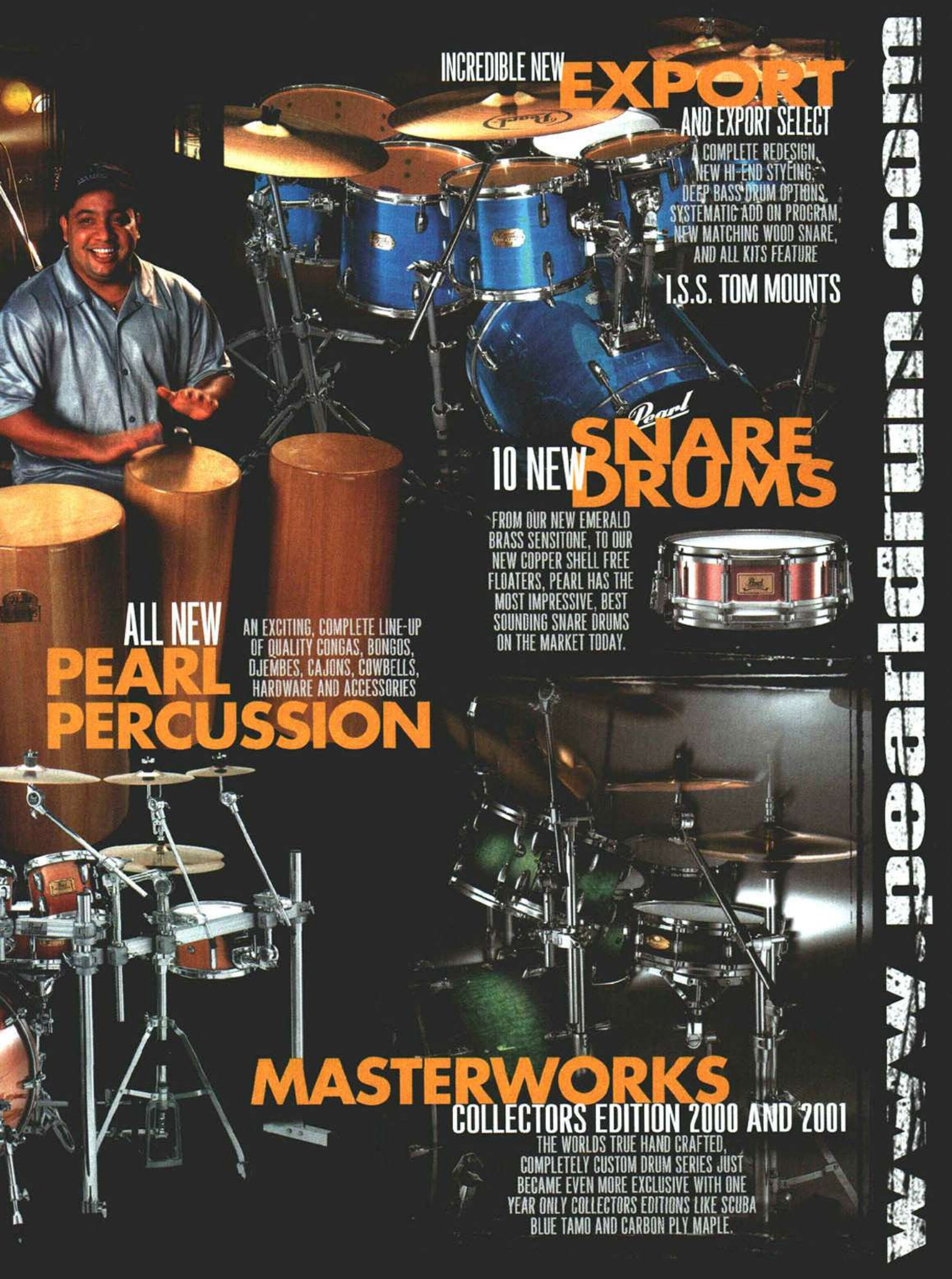
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Mike Portnoy On Microphone Placement

Q I saw both of your Dallas, Texas shows with Dream Theater, and I thoroughly enjoyed them. I noticed that you mike your snare from underneath. Why do you do this? Does it offer any specific advantages or disadvantages versus placing a mic' above your snare? Thanks for the great music Dream Theater produces.

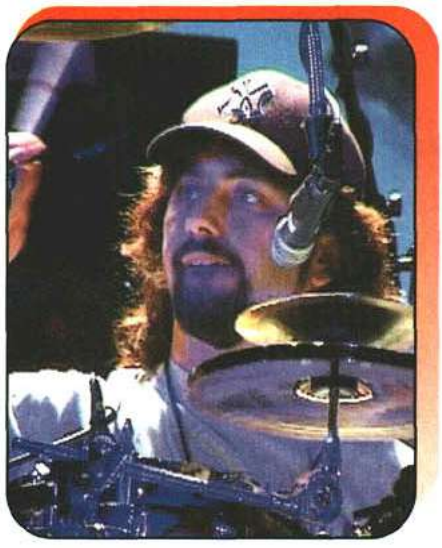
Andy Ban-
Arlington, TX

A To be honest with you, Andy, when it comes to mic' placement—live and in the studio—I leave all such questions to the sound technicians and engineers. After all, we pay them a lot of money in order to benefit from their experience and expertise. (I'm really buttering them up here!) So with that in mind, I turned your question over to Dream Theater's live sound engineer, Jerry Carillo. Here's Jerry's "expert" response:

"My preference is actually to mike the snare from the top *and* the bottom. Why both? When a snare drum is hit, there are really three different sounds produced, although they occur so fast our ears only hear them as one sound: 1) The sound of the stick striking the head, 2) the drum and head resonating, and 3) the snares and bottom head vibrating. By using two mic's we can capture a more realistic sound to present over the sound system.

"However, there are some situations where you wouldn't want to mike a snare from below. One might be a jazz gig, where the overall sound of the kit is more important than any one drum. Or the drum might be a shallow piccolo snare, on which a better sound could be achieved by using one mic'. Also, when you use two (or more) mic's on any one source, you have to deal with placement and phase, too."

Jerry is great at what he does, and the information above should give you a great snare-drum sound in a "best-case scenario." But Jerry also secretly sent me the *real* answer to your specific question, as follows: "Mike's drumset is so big that I can't *fit* a mic' on the top of the snare. Besides, he spits water all over his drums, and wet mic's tend to sound like garbage. So I put the snare mic' on the bottom."



Aha—the truth as only *Modern Drummer* can reveal! Thanks for listening, watching, and writing!

Bill Bruford's One Of A Kind Setup

Q Can you detail your drum and cymbal setup during the *One OfA Kind* album period? I'm especially interested in the RotoTom sizes and head combinations.

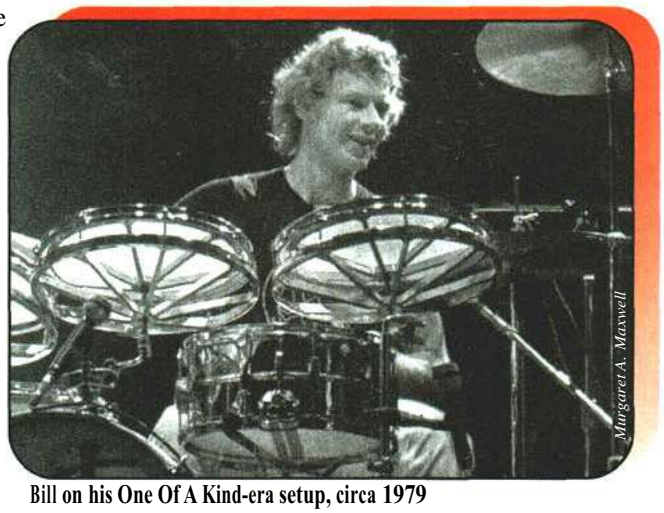
Ermilio Molina
South Coast Metro, CA

A Although I thank you for your question, it's not easy remembering stuff from 1999—let alone 1979! Fortunately, I managed to track down my response to the same question in a British paper called the *Melody Maker* from about that time, so this will be accurate.

I was using a Ludwig 22" bass drum, a Ludwig metal concert snare drum, two 14" and one 18" Remo RotoToms, a 16" Hayman floor tom, and a side rack containing suspended triangles, steel plates, a Paiste 22" gong, 6" and 8" RotoToms, ratchets, woodblocks, bells, a string of small cymbals, and other assorted paraphernalia. The hardware was a mish-mash of whatever was lying around, mostly Premier.

The cymbals included Paiste 15" Sound Edge hi-hats, a 16" 2002 crash, an 18" 2002 medium crash, and a 20" 2002 medium ride. The drumheads were a Remo Diplomat batter for the snare, and Ambassadors for one of the 14" RotoToms, the 18" RotoTom, the floor tom, and the bass drum. The other 14" RotoTom had a thinner Fiberskyn head on it. They gave a quicker, brighter, more clanging sound, which was what I was after at that time. But being so thin, they split very easily—usually in the middle of the gig. The lack of drumhead uniformity on the kit was because I couldn't get replacements fast enough. The Ambassadors would get me through the gig, but the Fiberskyns were *the* ones.

There is quite a good photo of something resembling this set on my Web site



Bill on his One Of A Kind-era setup, circa 1979

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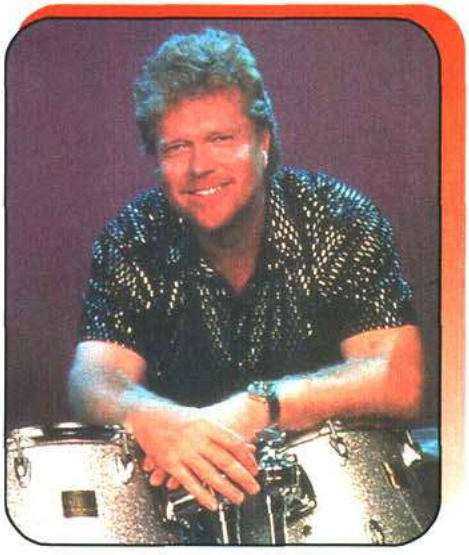
at www.billbruford.co.uk. As you look at it, you'll also notice that this was before the invention of the boom cymbal stand. The boom stand was, I believe, one of Tama's many good ideas, and one of the reasons I moved to them a year or so later.

For me—and for most of the drummers I knew and liked—it seemed quite normal to assemble drumkits made up of instruments and hardware from several different manufacturers, and probably in different finishes. Such kits were dictated by the music one had to play. They might have looked a little strange, but they usually guaranteed that at least you'd sound different from the other guy. In fact, it is only in the past couple of years that I have settled with a basic, small kit that originates entirely from one manufacturer: a beautiful Tama Starclassic Royal Walnut set. And boy, isn't life simple ! Thanks for your interest.

"JR" Robinson On The Rufus Sound



Q I've always enjoyed your playing and the sound you get from your drums. I have a live Rufus recording called *Stompin' At The Savoy* made several years ago. It's some of the best funk/R&B drumming on record, and by far the fattest-sounding snare I've ever heard.

I recently sat in with an "old school" R&B band. The drummer was using a clear Remo CS head on his snare. It worked for the sound he was after, but it was nothing like that old Rufus sound. Do you remember the type of heads and tuning you were using back then?

Marty
via Internet

A Thanks for the ears over the years. That record was made in the early 1980s, and won us a Grammy. I was playing a Yamaha Recording Custom kit with a sunburst finish. The bass drum was a 14x24, and the snare was a 6½x14 matching wood model. Back then I was using coated Emperors on the tops of the snare and toms. Today, Remo makes me a coated Emperor snare batter with a white CS dot on top. This head still has the sustain, with the durability I need.

I'm always looking for a "great sound" on records and live. That sound may change to fit the situation. But I agree that there is nothing like that old Rufus sound.

Submit questions for your favorite drummer to Ask A Pro, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Or you may email rvh@moderndrummer.com. We will do our best to pursue every inquiry. However, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to reach every artist or that any given artist will respond. Also, due to MD's publication schedule, artists' touring schedules, and other considerations, it sometimes takes several months before an inquiry and reply can be published.

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—Ed Shaughnessy, July '78

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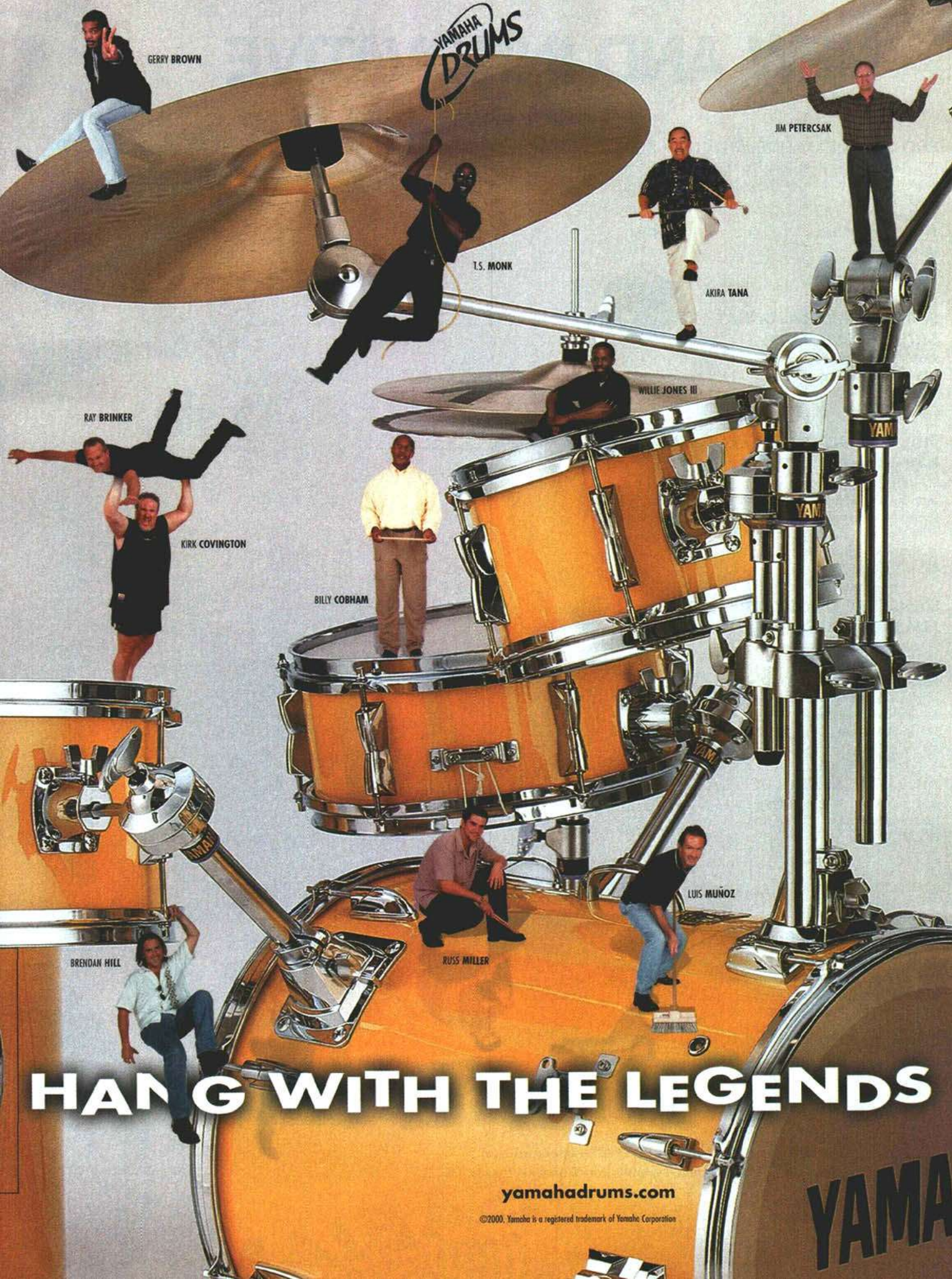
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Drum Corps Information

Q I have a few questions pertaining to drumming for a drum & bugle corps. What would be some techniques/rudiments/exercises to work on if I want to try out for the Boston Crusaders? I have the twenty-six rudiments, a "Lifetime Warm-up" from Tommy Igoe, and a few others, but is there anything else I should have in my repertoire? What would be a good book of drum corps solos for an audition?

Also, are there any drum corps CDs on the market? Maybe the award-winning cadences from the DCI championships that just took place? Finally, do you have any other advice for someone trying out?

Ryan Goldstone
via Internet

A We referred your question to our regular marching-percussion correspondent, Lauren Vogel Weiss. She replies, "If you're interested in auditioning for the Boston Crusaders Drum & Bugle Corps, check out the 'How To Join' section of their Web site (www.crusaders.com).

"Rudy Gowern, Percussion Caption Head for the Boston Crusaders, says that drummers need to play different rudiments, such as flams, rolls, etc. 'We look for someone with a vast knowledge of rudiments,' he explains. 'Someone with a lot of chops. We're also looking for people able to march and play at the same time, with great timing and an excellent quality of sound. Although previous marching experience is a definite plus, it is not required.' For more specific questions, you can email Rudy directly at Bostondrumline@aol.com.

"Although there are no specific solos to prepare, Gowern recommends the following books: *Stick Control* by George Lawrence Stone, *Syncopation* by Ted Reed, *Fresh Perspectives For The Modern Drumline* by Jim Casella and Murray Gusseck (from the Santa Clara Vanguard), published by Tap Space Publications, and *Championship Concepts For Marching Percussion* by Thom Hannum, published by Hal Leonard.

"Drum Corps International (DCI) releases recordings of the corps' performances each year, on CD and videotape. They are available through DCI's Web site (www.dci.org), or by calling (800) 495-7469. 'Listen to any recording from the 1980s and '90s,' Rudy Gowern suggests. 'You're going to hear a lot of great percussion work. I recommend the Bridgemen from the early '80s, the '86 Blue Devils, '87 Garfield Cadets, '93 Star of Indiana, and '98 Vanguard. And from this past summer, check out the Cavaliers, the Cadets of Bergen County, and, of course, the Boston Crusaders.'

"If you are interested in other corps in your area—senior corps or division II/III, in addition to the 'junior corps' of DCI—they may be contacted through the DCI Web site. There is also a newspaper devoted to drum & bugle corps coverage: *Drum Corps World* (www.drumcorpsworld.com). And for a wealth of background information, check out the 'Marching Percussion Supplement' in the May 1998 issue of *MD*. Contact MD's back-issue department at sueh@moderndrummer.com for ordering information."

Vintage Slingerland Snare

Q I recently acquired an old silver-sparkle Slingerland snare drum that I'd like some information about. It's an eight-lug, 5½x14 model with metal rims and claws for the tension rods. The shell is approximately 3/16" thick, with reinforcement hoops, and appears to be made of mahogany. The badge has raised gold letters on a black background, but no serial number. On the inside of the drum are some ink-stamped letters and numbers: a capital "M," the code "P-040," and the date "MAR 8, 19XX." The last two numbers of the date are hard to read because the ink soaked into the wood. They look like either "58" or "68." Any information you can give me about this drum would be greatly appreciated. I'm especially interested in learning where I might be able to get the bearing edge and reinforcement ring fixed, as well as where I could get some missing parts, such as claws and the snare strainer system.

Matthew Gehringer
via Internet

A MD's drum historian, Harry Cangany, replies: "The drum is a 3-ply Slingerland Student model made around 1958. The giveaway is the hoops. The 'M' would have indeed designated a mahogany shell. The 'P-40' code indicates that, at some point, the company was going to cover the shell in a pearl covering. Unless the drum was later stripped and refinished, it appears that Slingerland changed its mind and decided to finish this drum naturally.

"You can contact me (through MD) for help repairing the shell and finding the missing clips."

Dennis Plays Buddy

Q Can you tell me the names of the two tunes Dennis Chambers played at the 1989 Buddy Rich Memorial Concert at the Wiltern Theater in Los Angeles? They're featured on the DCI video of that concert. Were they numbers Buddy himself had played with his band?

BAZOOO7257
via Internet

A The very up-tempo tune performed by Dennis was "Dancin' Men." This was a regular in Buddy Rich's repertoire, and he often used it as an opening tune for a set. The other tune was "Sister Sadie." It, too, was a staple in the Rich library.

Cymbal Designations

Q What's the difference between a crash, a ride, and a crash/ride cymbal?

Sean Wagers
via Internet

A The terms refer to the most common usage for each type of cymbal. A "crash" cymbal is generally struck with force, in order to produce an explosive sound. This is used mainly for punctuation and emphasis of points in the music. A "ride" cymbal is generally played with the tip of a stick, brush, rod, etc. for the purpose of establishing a rhythmic pattern. The sound will be more contained and controlled than that of a crash cymbal, so as to pinpoint a distinct beat.

A crash/ride is a multi-purpose cymbal that lends itself to both purposes described above. It will tend to be thicker than most other crashes of the same diameter, but thinner than a ride cymbal of the same diameter. As a result, it will generally be

quite loud when crashed, and might have more than usual "wash" or "spread" when used as a ride.

Crash/rides are often popular with jazz drummers, who like the ability to use them in either capacity. They are also often sold with beginner kits, in an effort to economize on the number and cost of cymbals necessary to outfit the kit.

Tight Fit On Gretsch Drums

Q I can't fit any new head I try on my early 1960s Gretsch 16x16 floor tom. Everything's just a bit too small. The drum appears to be in round, and the heads that have been on it for years (the original bottom head, and an old Remo coated Ambassador on the top) fit perfectly. I haven't changed the heads for some time, but I never had this problem in the past. Before I try (and buy) everything out there, I'm hoping you can guide me to a solution.

Steve Leto
via Internet

A Gretsch drums from the 1960s are legendary for having this problem. The reason for it is that Gretsch made all of its shells exactly to their designated diameter. That is, your 16" floor tom is exactly 16" in diameter. This wasn't a problem when calf heads were used, because they were each custom-fitted to whatever drum they were going on. It also didn't make much difference with plastic heads if the drum had a lacquer finish; plastic heads could generally be fitted to the drum without a problem.

However, if the drum had a covered finish, the thickness of the wrap added to the diameter of the shell. This wound up being a good 1/8" larger than the designated diameter, and thus too big for a plastic drumhead to fit on comfortably.

One solution to this problem is to cut about ¼" of the covering away from the shell at each edge. This creates a true-diameter space for the drumhead to fit over. The hoop of the head will cover the shell where the covering has been removed, so there won't be any cosmetic problem.

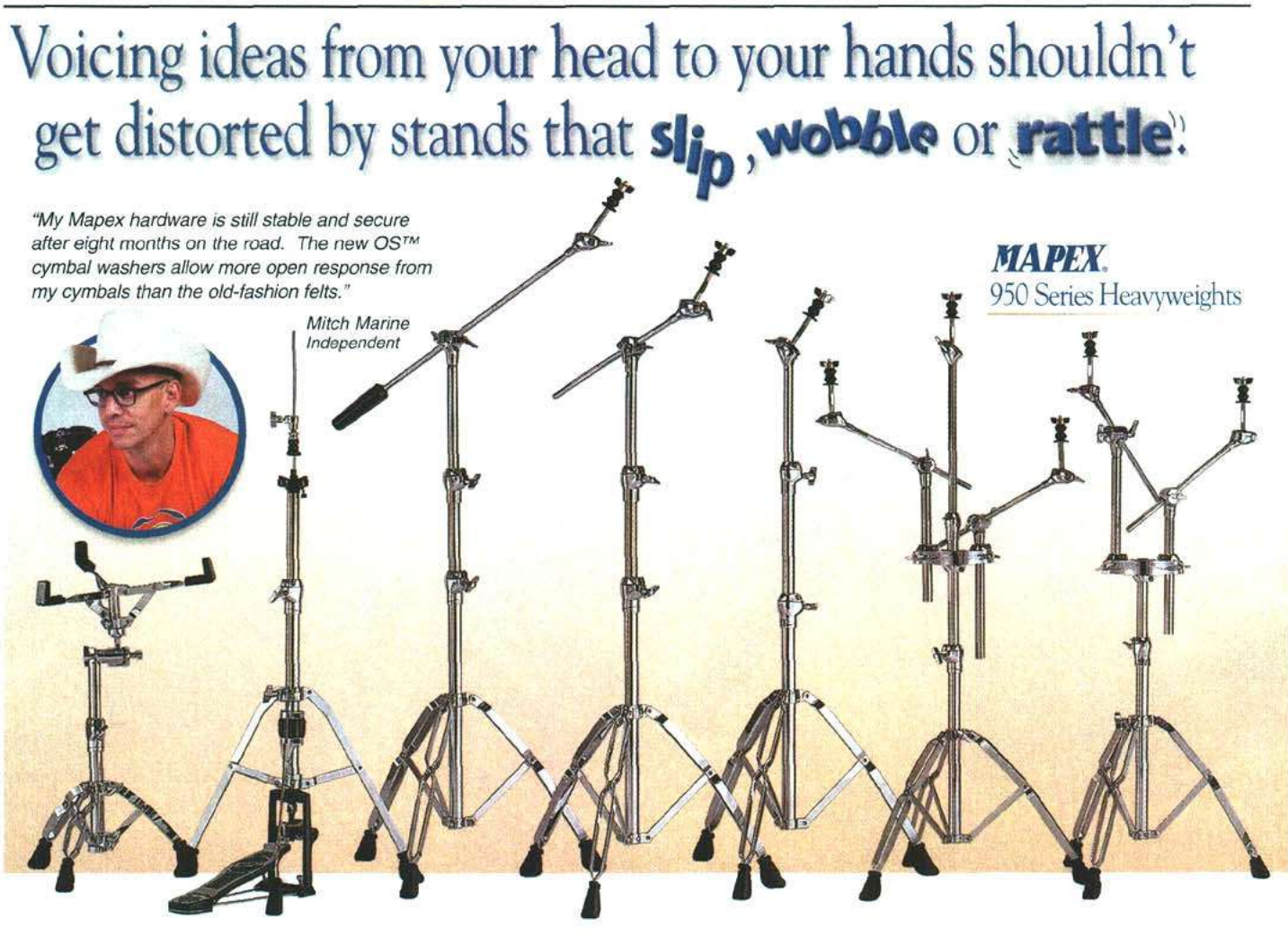
You might also consider employing some of Aquarian's American Vintage heads. These are made slightly oversize to fit onto drums of the vintage era, which were often made a little larger in diameter than today's drums. They are also formulated to simulate a calfskin sound, which many drummers like in conjunction with Gretsch drums.

Deep Vs. Shallow Shells

Q I'm currently shopping for new drums, and I'm wondering about shell depths, especially on toms. During the late 1980s and early '90s, deep "power" toms were popular, while shallower "standard" depths seem more popular today. What's the difference in terms of performance?

Jay C.
via Internet

A To be frank, at least part of the "difference" is marketing. In the 1980s, power shells were "different" from the standard sizes of the day. So manufacturers could promote them that way. To a



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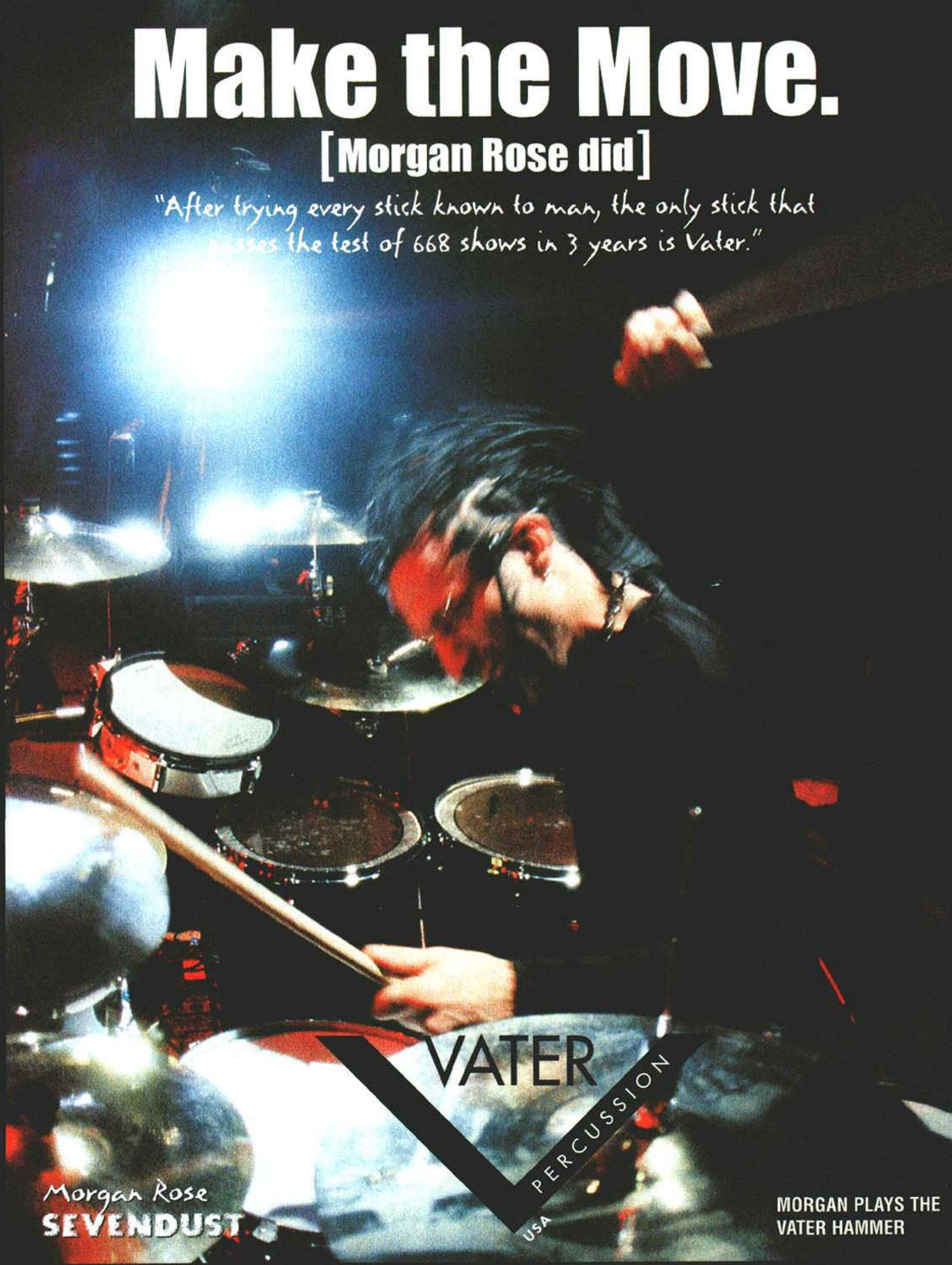

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certain extent, the reverse is true today with shallower shells. Whatever can seem "new" and "improved" will be touted, and a lot of people will accept them as being "better" than the current norm.

That being said, there *are* some acoustic differences that might affect your selection. Deep-shelled "power" toms will produce a lower fundamental tone than shallower drums of the same diameter. The sound generated by the top head will bounce around within the larger cavity of the deeper drum, which also can give the impression of a "bigger" or "fatter" sound.

However, that sound can also get "caught inside" the larger shells, unless the impact on the top head is enough to force it down to the resonant bottom head and out of the drum. (In fact, the term "power" toms could easily be interpreted to mean that it *takes* more power to get them to respond at their full potential.) Thus power toms are not as sensitive to less powerful playing.

Shallower toms will not produce the same low fundamental pitch as their larger "power" siblings. However, the fundamental tone that they *do* produce can get out of the drum faster, with less adulteration as a result of time spent within the drum shell. Thus the fundamental that is projected can be perceived as "purer," which can give the impression of depth. As a result, these drums can *sound* lower in pitch than they actually are. Also, shallower drums can respond more readily to less impact than power toms can, making them very comfortable to play on (and easy to mike up).

As is the case with most questions of drum selection, neither type of drum is inherently better than the other. It's a matter of which set of performance characteristics best suits your needs.

Pedal Tension

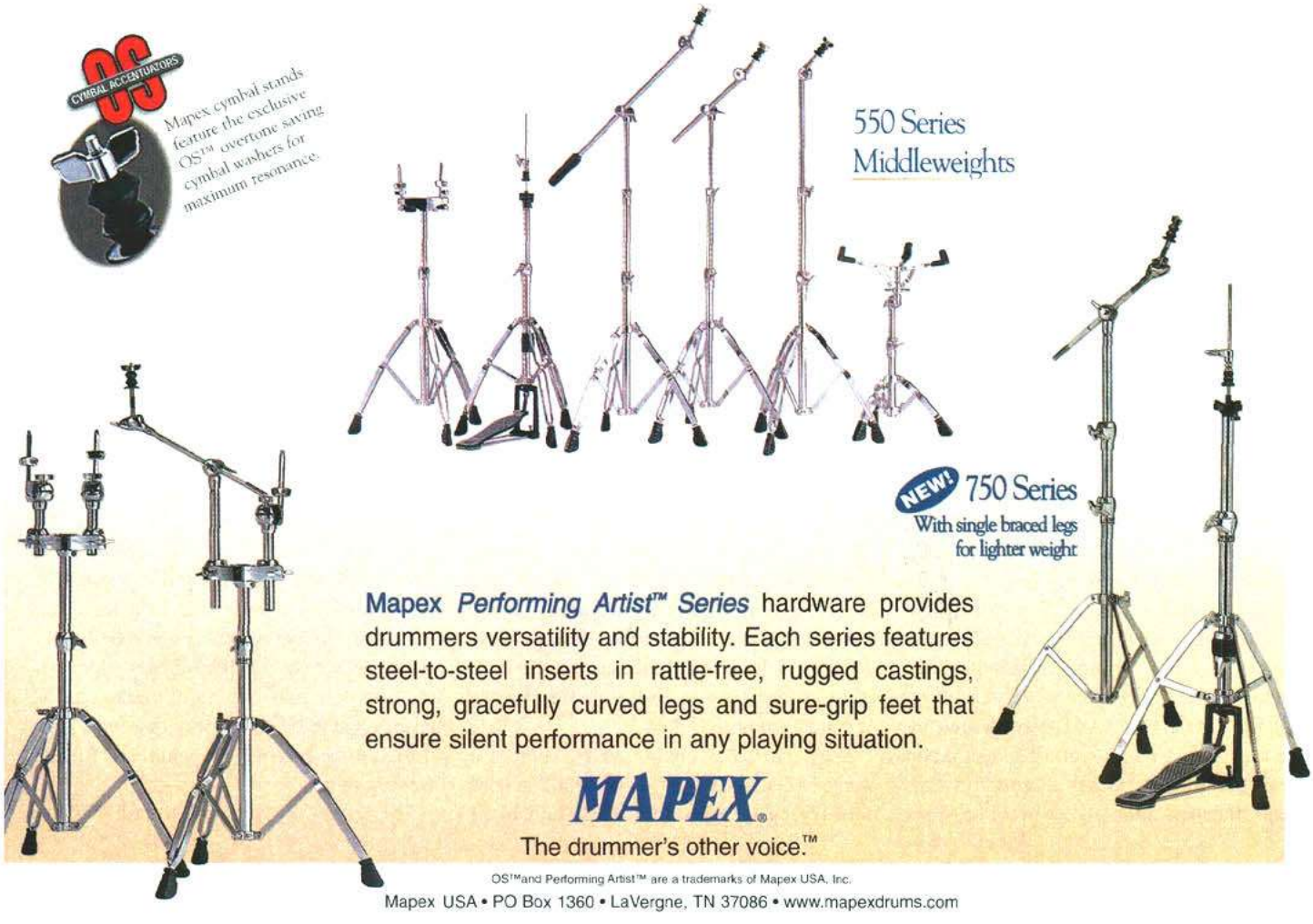
Q Ever since I first began playing, my theory about bass drum pedal springs has been: The tighter the better. I usually tighten the spring as much as possible, making the pedal very springy and hard to push on. The thought behind this is that eventually the "strength training" would produce a very strong foot.

I've been playing for a while now, and I think my theory is working to my advantage. But will there be a time when I should loosen my pedals to a more comfortable level? Or should I continue "training" my feet until I can operate really tight pedals with no effort at all?

Dave D'aranjo
Singapore

A If you've trained your foot to operate a pedal with a tight spring, you'll probably be most comfortable if you keep that spring tension. Beyond the sheer "strength training" that you've achieved, you've also trained your foot to deal with the pedal's performance factors, like timing, leverage, bounce off the head, etc. If you lower the spring tension significantly, your foot will most likely have a tendency to overplay the pedal. You'll have to train it all over again to get used to the new pedal action.

Several famous drummers played pedals with very stiff springs for their entire careers. If it works for you and gives you the musical performance you need, why tamper with it?



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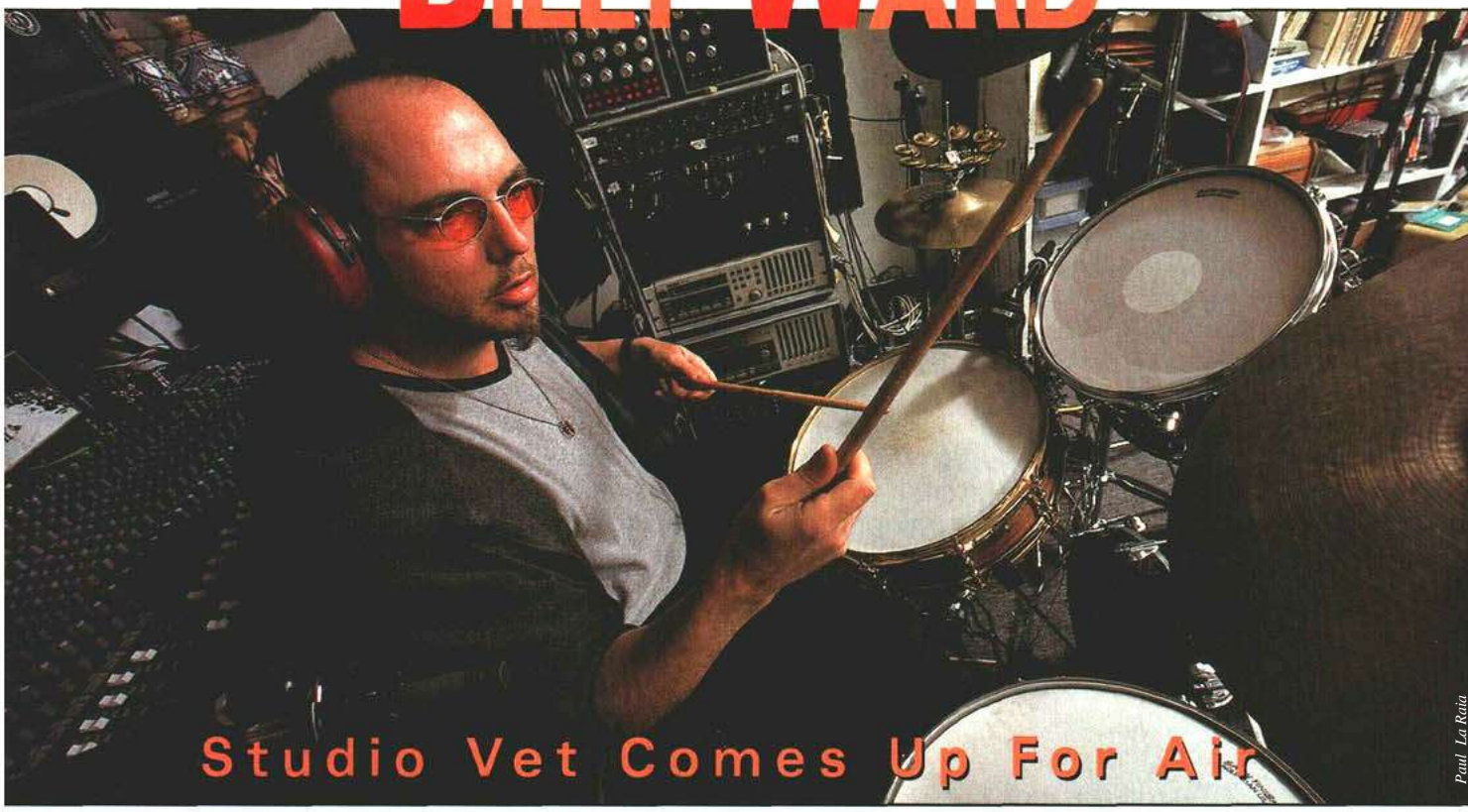


"*It's* just the sweetest thing you've ever heard—by far my favorite sound of the tour." That's veteran drummer Billy Ward's description of Joan Osborne *warming up.* "She has a little high-pitched vocal thing she does right before going on that sounds eerie, like an angel. Then she walks on stage and tears it up. Joan's really gifted."

It would take an artist with loads of talent to coax a master like Ward (whose list of credits is as long as your arm) out of his comfortable and creatively satisfying lifestyle. He's spent the last few years playing on and producing projects at his DrumPike studio. But according to Billy, something was missing. "I've always wanted to be in a band," he admits. "The camaraderie, the closeness, the teasing—I dig the whole vibe. And even though the Joan gig is more of a rent-a-band situation, it's becoming a family as much as any band. Besides, after two years of sessions, I just wanted to get out and play."

How did Ward land the Osborne gig? "As usual, someone championed me," he replies. In this case, apparently *a few* people had recommended him. "Thankfully no one asked me to audition," Billy says. "I didn't have to prove myself. Joan and I had lunch, and we had a great time talking. She's very cool. After that she asked me if I'd do it."

As for the music, apparently Ward is enjoying the bejesus out of Osborne's soulful pop sound. Some of the tunes are pulled from her 1996 smash, *Relish,* though most are from the recent *Righteous Love.* "In terms of the drumming, the material is *real* groove-oriented," Billy says, happily. "A lot of it is slinky, sexy, Motown-ish—very Purdie-esque. There's also some Ringo- and Charlie Watts-inspired grooves."

Any particular challenges? "There's a song called 'If I Was Your Man,' where I'm trying to reproduce tabla and hand drum sounds," Billy says. "I start the tune off playing the kit with my hands, eventually going to sticks. It took me a couple of rehearsals to work out the hand patterns, and I had to reconfigure my setup a little bit to accommodate that.

"The *big* challenge for me has been the singing," Billy says, laughing. "I've done it before, but it's not something I'm very good at. Joan wants a band vibe, so we're all in it together, contributing any way we can. I'm enjoying singing, but I just hope it's not too ugly. Everybody's so nice on this tour, I don't know if they'd tell me!"

So Ward now finds himself in the midst of a multi-week jaunt, the first leg of a potentially longer tour. "I won't be home for seven weeks," Billy states, "which is going to be tough. My wife, Maura, and I haven't had to be apart for a long time. I'm thrilled to be out playing again, but I miss her very much."

William F. Miller

Tim McGraw's

Billy Mason Good-Deed Drummer

Billy Mason has one of the most coveted country gigs out there with Tim McGraw, but he never takes his success for granted. Even though he's currently on the *Soul To Soul* tour with McGraw and the country star's wife, Faith Hill, Mason never forgets that there are people who are less fortunate, and who he wants to help if he can.

Last year, when Mason was performing in Atlantic City with McGraw, he met a ten-year-old boy named David who has multiple sclerosis. David was in a wheelchair, and the drummer felt compelled to talk to him after the show. "I asked him what he wanted to be when he grew up," Billy says. "And he said, 'I want to be a drummer just like Billy Thunder Mason.' I said, 'If you had a set of drums like mine, what color would you want?' He told me red."

Mason knew exactly what he had to do: He bought a set of drums through DW for David as a Christmas present. Zildjian sent cymbals, Pro-Mark sent sticks, a bag, and T-shirts, and everything was sent to David's house.

"Now he sits in his wheelchair and plays them," Billy says. "I wish more drummers—and artists—would do things like that. Don't always just think of yourself; look around and see the people who wish they could do what you do. I play for Tim, but I don't just want to be Tim's drummer. I want to have another purpose for being here."

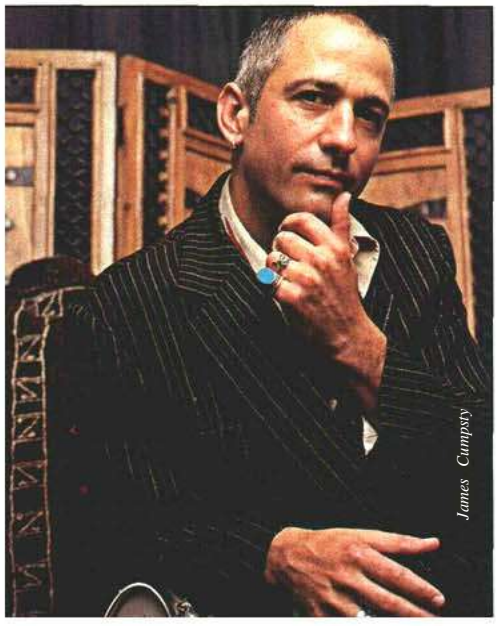
Mason is constantly volunteering his time to charities, and truly puts his energy where his mouth is. He's organized softball games to earn money for acquaintances with illnesses, and he has obtained autographed instruments, which he's auctioned to raise money for needy individuals. He's also played Santa Claus to local drummers to give them a shot in the arm. Mason even housed a fellow drummer he barely knew when he moved to town and found him a day job to enable him to support his family. Most recently, Mason did a clinic at his old high school in Dayton, Ohio and donated his earnings to the music department.

All of these deeds, Billy says, make him feel great. He says he doesn't wish to brag about this stuff, but wants to inspire more people to use their influence and position to go the extra mile in lending a helping hand. "I obviously don't do it for everyone," he says, "but you can tell when you're supposed to do things like this."

Robyn Flans

Chuck Sabo Studio Star

If you're looking to personify the adage "It takes years of hard work to become an overnight success," look no farther than American-in-London Chuck Sabo. Though his recording credits include an impressive list of heavyweights and more than a dozen Top-10 singles in the UK, Chuck's kept largely out of the limelight, focusing instead on making connections and, always, playing for the song.



On XTC's critically acclaimed new album, *Wasp Star,* Chuck's still playing for the song, but there's no chance you'll miss him. Throughout the band's stripped-down, guitar-oriented return to power pop, it's obvious that XTC relied heavily on Sabo's steady and soulful style. "I wanted a drummer who was fiercely rhythmic and precise but also had a very loose backbone to his playing," says guitarist Andy Partridge. "Our producer recommended Chuck, and we were wowed immediately." Bassist Colin Moulding agrees: "He chooses his moments extremely well. I think he's one of the best drummers we've worked with."

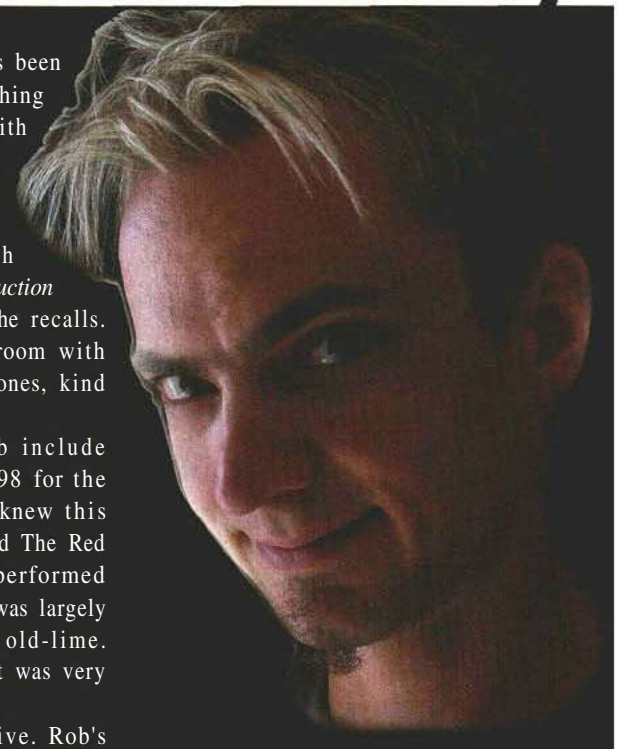
Sabo's background as a songwriter and producer drives his approach to drum parts. "I focus on the melody, because I want to support the song and the singer," he explains. "Andy and Colin were great in that they made me slightly shift my approach. For example, they'd describe what they wanted for a song in terms of colors. I enjoyed it, because if you're not careful, you can get jaded by how straightforward most sessions are."

Between sessions Sabo can be found in his home studio, where he writes with his wife, Jeanette. Recently they've been writing and helping produce a record for singer Sally Ann Marsh, and Chuck can also be heard on Made In London's debut, which he describes as "En Vogue with heavier guitars."

Were the two decades that Sabo spent in Manhattan and London—working as a furniture mover while playing any gigs that came his way—worth it? "When you're up & coming, you get called in to play because someone heard your name, not your style," he says, smiling. "But now I'm getting called to play the way I play, which is nice."

Todd Bernhardt

Rob Ladd
Jobbing With Don Henley



Rob Ladd has hit the big time. *again.* First, he did it by sharing drum duties on Alanis Morissette's smash debut. *Jagged Little Pill.* These days he's doing it on Don Henley's *Inside Job* tour.

Rob and Don first crossed paths back in '91 while Rob was the drummer lor ex-Bangle Susanna Hoffs' solo tour. "When Don's music director/guitarist. Frank Simms, was putting the new band together, he called to invite me down to the auditions." Rob explains. "I learned nine songs in two days, straight from the records." As one would expect with such a high-profile gig. there were plenty of drummers at that audition. "Some of my friends were there, even some very familiar faces." he says. "I was a little nervous."

On tour. Rob has to re-create drum machine parts. Watching Rob play, it's clear he comfortably embraces loops into his playing. "I like playing to loops." he admits. "It's fun. It really enhances the drum parts. It's *almost* like playing with a percussionist." Speaking of which. Rob gets to perform with percussionist Danny Reyes on the tour. "Working with Danny has been great. He has an easy way of teaching me, a rock drummer, to play with Latin influences."

Growing up. one of Rob's early drum heroes was John Bonham. "I did a Meredith Brooks record called *Deconstruction* with producer David Darling." he recalls. "We recorded the drums in a room with just three or four room microphones, kind of the way Bonham recorded."

Other achievements for Rob include winning a Tony award in 1998 for the Broadway show *Fool Moon.* "I knew this band from North Carolina called The Red Clay Ramblers," he says. "I performed with them on the show, which was largely improvised every night in an old-lime. Spike Jones type ol' setting. It was very rewarding."

From a drummer's perspective. Rob's current gig has to be challenging, since he's playing for one of rock's most famous drummers. "It's *very* exciting." Rob says. "I can put a healthy amount of pressure on myself every night, knowing Don's listening closely to the drum parts. He hears *everything* I play, so I feel obligated to do a good job."

Billy Amendola

Brian Burwell
Neve's Nerve Center

Just when Brian Burwell's studio drumming career looked like it was about to take off, along comes pop/rock band Neve, asking him to join. It looks like Brian's decision to put sessions like Michael Bolton aside for the rock life is paying off: The buzz around Neve has gotten pretty loud lately.

"The recording with Neve went great," Burwell says. "We spent about three months in the studio. We wanted to use whatever drums sounded best, so we had Drum Doctors bring over about five of their best drumkits, and we did a blindfold test. All of us picked the same kit: Peavey. The toms and kick sounded amazing. As for the parts I played, I just went in and nailed them. I did everything to a click track."

One of Brian's favorite tracks is "Digital On," because it's a solid rock tune. "The album is very pop-oriented," he admits, "but live we're a lot more of a rock band. Even though I grew up playing jazz, fusion, and funk, I tend to favor the heavier songs on the album.

"There's a song called Tree Form,'" Brian continues, "which is probably one of the harder ones to play because the right foot pattern is a single bass part, but I play all of the hits the bass player does. It almost sounds like double bass. That took a while to record, because I was burning out my foot."

According to Burwell, Neve needs power and energy from him. "The fact that I was a chops guy was what impressed them at first," he says. "But when the band evolved into a power-pop group, they needed me to play solid, which has been a challenge. They also want me to have some personality on the drums on stage. I'm very into the audience. I try to steal as much attention as I can. And the band says that's what they want!"

Robyn Flans

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AYOTTE
CUSTOM-CANADA

news

Coming off a summer and fall tour with John Fogerty, **Kenny Aronoff** has recently been recording with Joe Cocker, Melissa Etheridge, Ricky Martin, Andy Griggs, Josh Joplin, Billy Dean, and a new band called PETE. He's also thrilled to be a part of an exhibit at the Children's Museum of Indianapolis, which runs through June 2001.

Ritch Battersby is on the debut record by Grand Theft Audio, *Blame Everyone.*

Dennis Wolfe is on the self-titled debut Virgin/Immortal release from U.S. Crush.

Tony Mellace is on Seventeen's debut album, *Bikini Pie Fight.*

Albert Bouchard is on Brain Surgeons' latest, *Piece Of Work.*

Allison Miller is doing gigs with Rachel Z Trio in support of their recent Wayne Shorter tribute CD, *On The Milky Way Express.*

Shannon Larkin on the road with Amen, supporting their new album, *We Have Come For Your Parents.*

Gregg Field has been recording with Stevie Wonder, Dianne Schuur, Stephen Bishop, Tim Draxl, and Monica Mancini. He also produced the latest Nnenna Freelon record, which features **Woody Williams and Ed Thigpen** on drums.

Tris Imboden is on tour with Chicago and on Freddie Ravel's new LP.

Adam Pedretti is on the road with Killing Heidi.

Danny Martin is on Bottlefly's self-titled debut on Universal.

R&B drummer **Darren Metz** has been busy on projects with Grover Washington's former musical director, Bill Jolly. He's also working with Boyz II Men's musical director, Colt Younger.

John Lewis is on the road with Melissa Manchester in between dates with The Fifth Dimension.

Yvette Preyer is touring with Michael McDonald.

Percussionist **Norman Hedman** has a new CD, *Taken By Surprise.*

Hale Pulsifer is touring with Angry Salad.

James "Fed" Carroll is on the road with Ultraspank, promoting their CD *Progress.*

Larry Crockett has released his first instructional video, *Tips For The Beginner.*

Jose Pasillas is on tour with Incubus, promoting their CD *Make Yourself.*

Willie Nelson's 1985 album, *Me And Paul,* is being re-released as part of DCC Compact Classic's Encore Classics with **Paul English,** Nelson's longtime musical collaborator, on drums.

Willie Leacox, longtime member of America, is celebrating the band's thirtieth anniversary with the release of Rhino's three-CD box, with a tour to coincide.

Bernard Purdie and Don Williams are on *The Best Of Arthur Prysock, The Milestone Years.*

Steve Potts, Lee Spath, and Tony Braunagel are on Maria Muldaur's *Music For Lovers.*

Pete Stern is on Treason's latest, *Code Of Silence.* Some of the cymbals Pete used were donated by Yes's **Alan White,** who also played on one track.

Master hand drummer **Glen Velez** has released a new solo album, *Breathing Rhythms,* which is available on his Web site, www.glenvelez.com.

Russ Kunkel is on the soundtrack to *Dr. T & The Women.*

Kim Zick is on the new Mrs. Fun album, *Funsville.*

Yonrico Scott and Phillip Smith are on Joseph Patrick Moore's *Soul Cloud.*

The late, critically acclaimed Finish avant-garde drummer **Edward Vesala's** 1977 album *Rodina* has been released on disc by Love Records.

Tony Allen, long-time drummer with Nigerian Afro-Beat superstar Fela Kuti, is on Ernest Ranglin's *Modern Answers To Old Questions.*

Martin Drew is on Oscar Peterson's collaboration with Michel LeGrand, *Trail Of Dreams: A Canadian Suite.*

Joe LaBarbera (of legendary pianist Bill Evans fame) is on *Silver Storm* by The Bud Shank Sextet.

Dan Wojciechowski is on Steve Holy's *Blue Moon.*

Congratulations to **Matt Walker** and his wife on the birth of their son, Dylan Adrian.

drum dates

This month's important events in drumming history.

Chick Webb was born on February 10, 1909.

Baby Dodds passed away on February 14, 1959.

Tony Williams passed away on February 23, 1997.

Meet **Ringo Starr.** The Beatle's first US album, *Meet The Beatles,* hits number 1 on February 15, 1964. It stays there for eleven weeks—until *The Beatles' Second Album* replaces it.

"Oye Coma Va," written by **Tito Puente,** becomes a hit for Santana in February of 1971. **Michael Shrieve** is on drums.

Nick Mason and Pink Floyd unveil *Dark Side Of The Moon,* one of the longest-charting records to date, on February 17, 1972.

The Average White Band, with original drummer **Robbie McIntosh,** hit number 1 on February 22, 1975 with "Pick Up The Pieces."

During the week of February 1, 1992 Nirvana's *Nevermind* becomes the number-1 record on the *Billboard* charts. **Dave Grohl** is on drums.

Alanis Morissette's *Jagged Little Pill,* with drummers **Matt Laug and Rob Ladd,** hits the number-1 spot on February 24, 1996.

Happy Birthday

Hal Blaine (February 5, 1929)
Harvey Mason (February 22, 1947)
Joe English (February 7, 1949)
Nigel Olsson (February 10, 1949)
Manny Elias (February 21, 1953)
Ron Welty (February 1, 1971)
Johnny Rabb (February 29, 1972)

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Drive.

Since driving a band is the drummer's function, it's no coincidence that so many progressive players play DW 5000 Series bass drum pedals. Only the 5000 Series is available in single and double Delta II, Delta and Standard models with a choice of nylon strap or Turbo (center) and Accelerator (off-set) Chain-Drives®. It's these original, performance-proven, DW "drive" systems that are preferred by today's drummers— drummers who know the ride is always smoother when your foot's on a DW pedal.

Tommy Lee (Methods Of Mayhem)
5000TH Delta Turbo Single (x2)
Jim Bogios (Sheryl Crow)
5000AH Delta Accelerator Single
Mike Mangini (Steve Vai)
5002NH Delta Nylon Strap Double
Mike Portnoy (Dream Theater)
5002TD Delta II Turbo Double
Gregg Bissonette (independent)
5002AD Delta II Accelerator Double

DW Pedal Artists (from left to right)

5000AD Delta II Accelerator Single Bass Drum Pedal

5000NH Delta Nylon Strap Single Bass Drum Pedal (at left)

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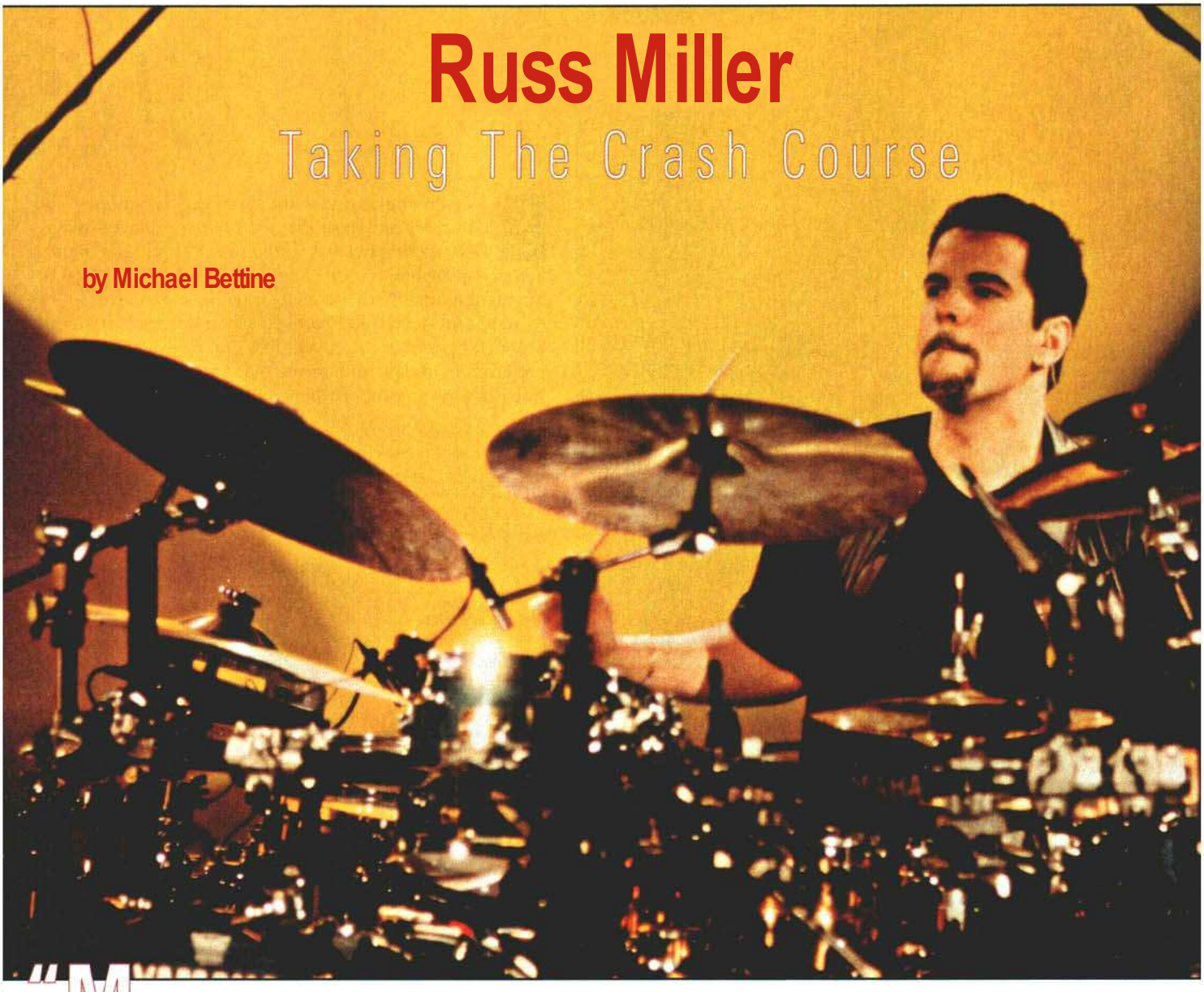
Russ Miller

Taking The Crash Course

by Michael Bettine



"Music is what's important," says drummer Russ Miller. "I always think about music, and not just licks." This attitude, combined with perseverance, has led Russ to become one of the top session and touring drummers in Los Angeles.

The Canton, Ohio native grew up listening to big band recordings by drummers like Buddy Rich, Gene Krupa, and Big Sid Catlett. He started drum lessons at the age of ten, and by fifteen was playing clubs in a Top-40 band. "I'd go to school, have marching band practice after school, run to a drum lesson after that, and then go play a gig from nine at night until one in the morning. Then I'd get up at seven the next morning and do it all over again. All the other kids were hanging out and trying to get into bars. I was *working* in bars. But it was good."

After high school, Russ headed south to the University of Miami School of Music. He also studied with Jim Chapin. "Jim used to come down to Tampa all the time," says Russ. "I'd connect with him and work on hand stuff. I was also working in a music store called Resurrection Drums. I helped design the curriculum for the Miami Percussion Institute, which was a school affiliated with Resurrection Drums. I also started doing some local clinics."

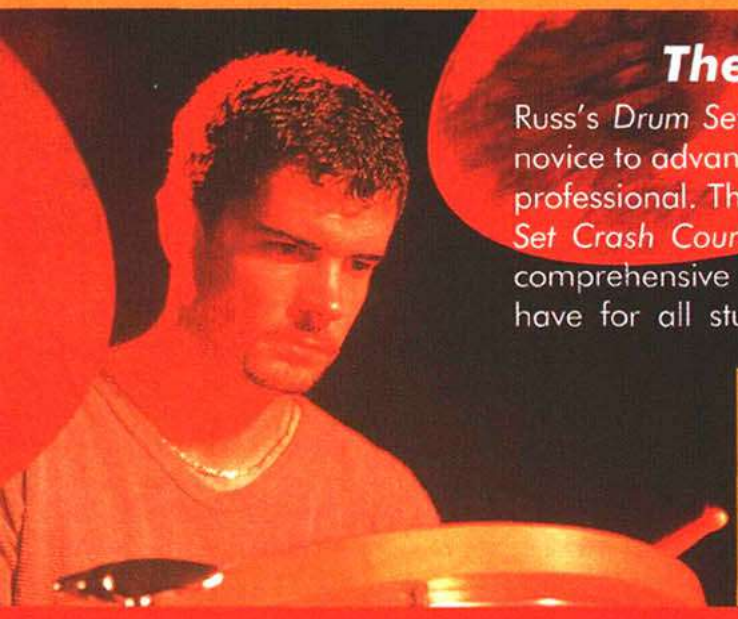
Russ's clinic experience helped lead to a relationship with Yamaha Drums. "Back then," says Russ, "Yamaha had moved their drum sales into their Band & Orchestra Division in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Suddenly, clarinet players who normally sold instruments to band directors were in charge of selling pro-line drumsets. The regional rep for my area called our school, wanting to hang out and learn more about drums. He came down for a few days, and we spent a lot of time together. When he came to some of my clinics, he saw that I was using Yamaha drums. So he got me my first endorsement as a regional clinician.

"My clinics were small ones at high schools," Russ recalls, "but I also got to attend bigger ones, seeing drummers like Steve Gadd and Dave Weckl. I've been with Yamaha for ten years now, and in that

Warner Bros. Publications

Presents

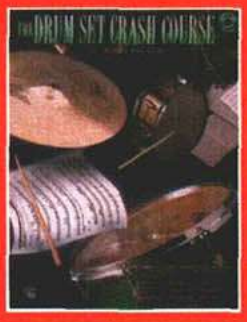
Russ Miller's Drum Set Crash Course



The Drum Set Crash Course

Russ's *Drum Set Crash Course* is a complete curriculum for any novice to advanced player and is great reference material for any professional. The *Drum Set Crash Course*, made up of *The Drum Set Crash Course* book and video and *Transitions*, is the most comprehensive drumset learning tool available and is a must have for all students, teachers, professionals, and enthusiasts.

"This is an invaluable source of information. Russ's knowledge of so many music styles is obvious in his playing. This package is a look inside the process of getting to that level of undertanding. A great book!" — Dave Weckl



Drum Set Crash Course Book

(PERC9611CD) US $24.95

"This book succeeds where most drum books fail. This is the most comprehensive package of its kind." — *Modern Drummer*

This book covers the essential foundations and grooves that will prepare the drummer for a variety of musical situations encountered on the average professional gig, in the school band, or in the practice room. Designed to be an encyclopedia of many drumming styles, *The Drum Set Crash Course* covers Afro-Cuban and Brazilian, blues, country, hip hop, jazz, reggae, rock, and much more. Includes live-band play-along tracks.

Drum Set Crash Course Video

(VH0508) US $19.95

The Drum Set Crash Course video offers an easy-to-follow visual representation of the material that Russ covers in the book, plus developing 2-limb to advanced 4-limb independence as well as how to master more than 18 different styles of music.

Transitions

(0418B) US $19.95

Transitions is the ultimate independence learning system for beginners through advanced players, covering everything from 2-limb to advanced 4-limb. Every exercise has a corresponding play-along track from a live band recording to help gain facility on the instrument while playing music to become a better musician. Each independence level has different styles of play-along tracks, from alternative rock to blues, funk, and hip hop.

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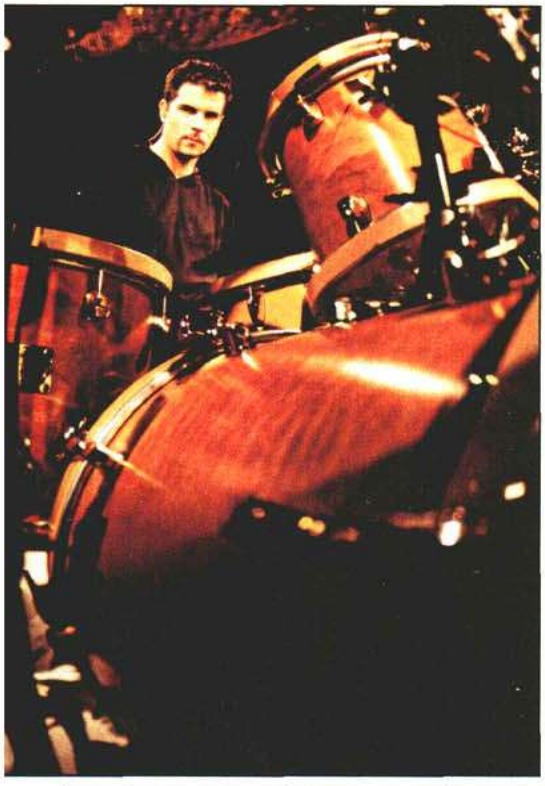
time I've been able to do clinics with just about every hero I had as a kid. It's pretty wild to do a clinic with Elvin Jones, and then hang out with him afterward. It's like a dream come true."



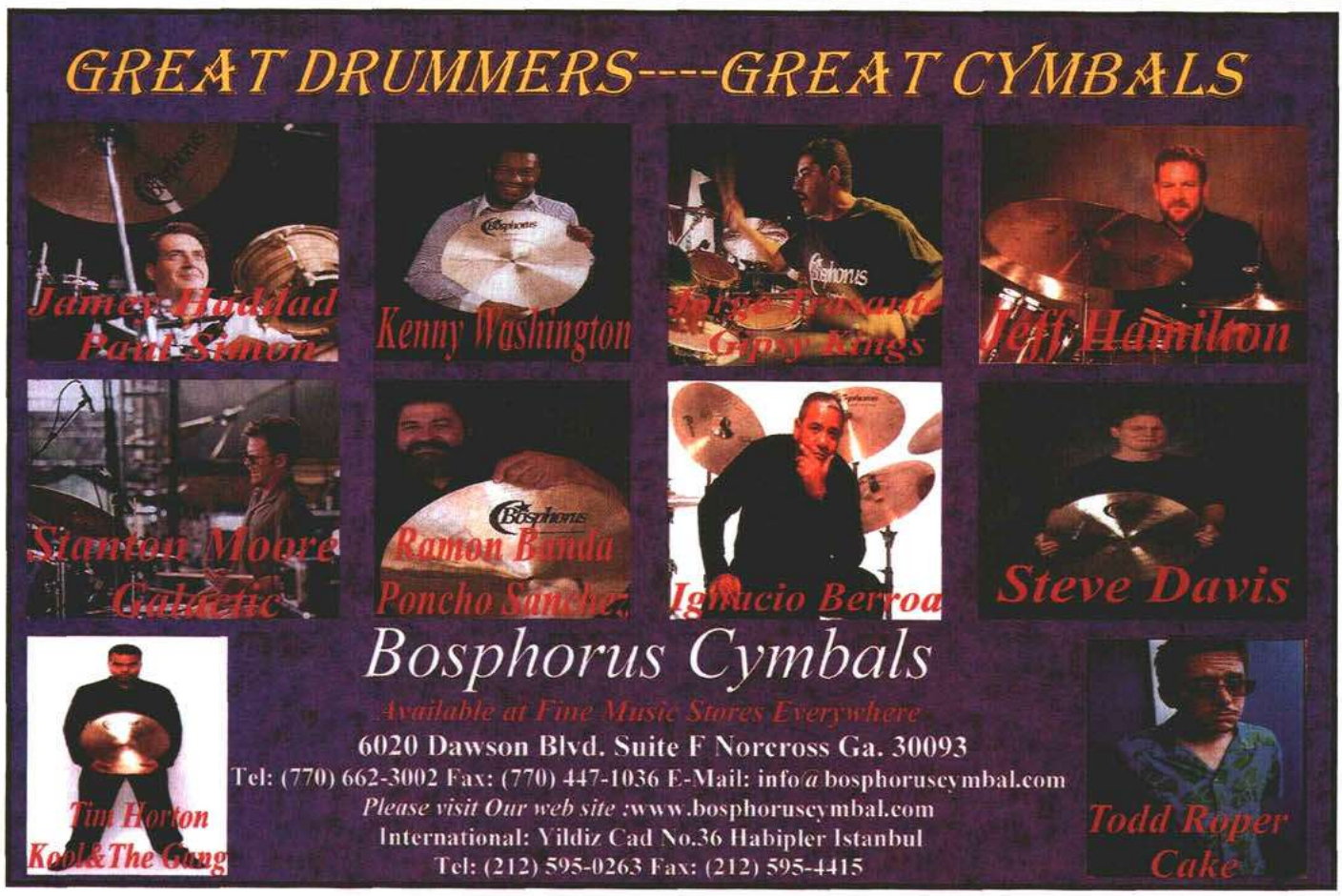
Realizing that music is as much a business as any other career, Russ set out to market himself. "There are certain things that you attempt to do in any business, such as diversifying. In music, that means not saying, 'I'm a jazz drummer—if the phone rings for a bebop gig, I work; if it doesn't, I sit at home.'

"In a sense," Russ continues, "I'm an entrepreneur, trying to develop the best possible product. But if no one ever hears about it, what's the point? A business has to market its product. So after the door was opened for me with Yamaha, I booked a clinic tour up and down the East Coast. I'd drive from Miami to North Carolina for fifty bucks, just to get things going. I paid to have posters printed. Once Yamaha saw that, our relationship grew, and I started getting more recognition."

"In a sense, I'm an entrepreneur, trying to develop the best possible product. But if no one ever hears about it, what's the point?"

Even with these opportunities, Russ received a rude awakening in Miami. "I'd already been playing for years before I moved to Miami," he says. "I figured that while I went to school, I'd also play gigs around town, like I had in Ohio. But I couldn't *buy* a gig, because I had no Afro-Cuban chops at all. We just didn't play that style in Ohio. My idea of playing a rumba was like the Casio keyboard version, and that didn't cut it. In Miami they play the authentic version."

Russ knew that he had to get his Latin chops together fast. So he studied every book and video he could get his hands on. But he ran into an obstacle. "There are awesome materials out there," he says. "But the problem I had was that they were so in-depth. It was incredible information and I loved it, but I needed to be able to play a cha cha on the next Friday night. And I needed to do it convincingly, in a way where the other cats wouldn't look daggers at me in the middle of the set for



being too white-bread."

Another problem Russ had with the available instructional material was that it focused mainly on hand percussion, not on drumset. So he decided to go right to the source for his education. "I saved money from my day job each week so I could hire hand percussionists to play all that stuff for me.

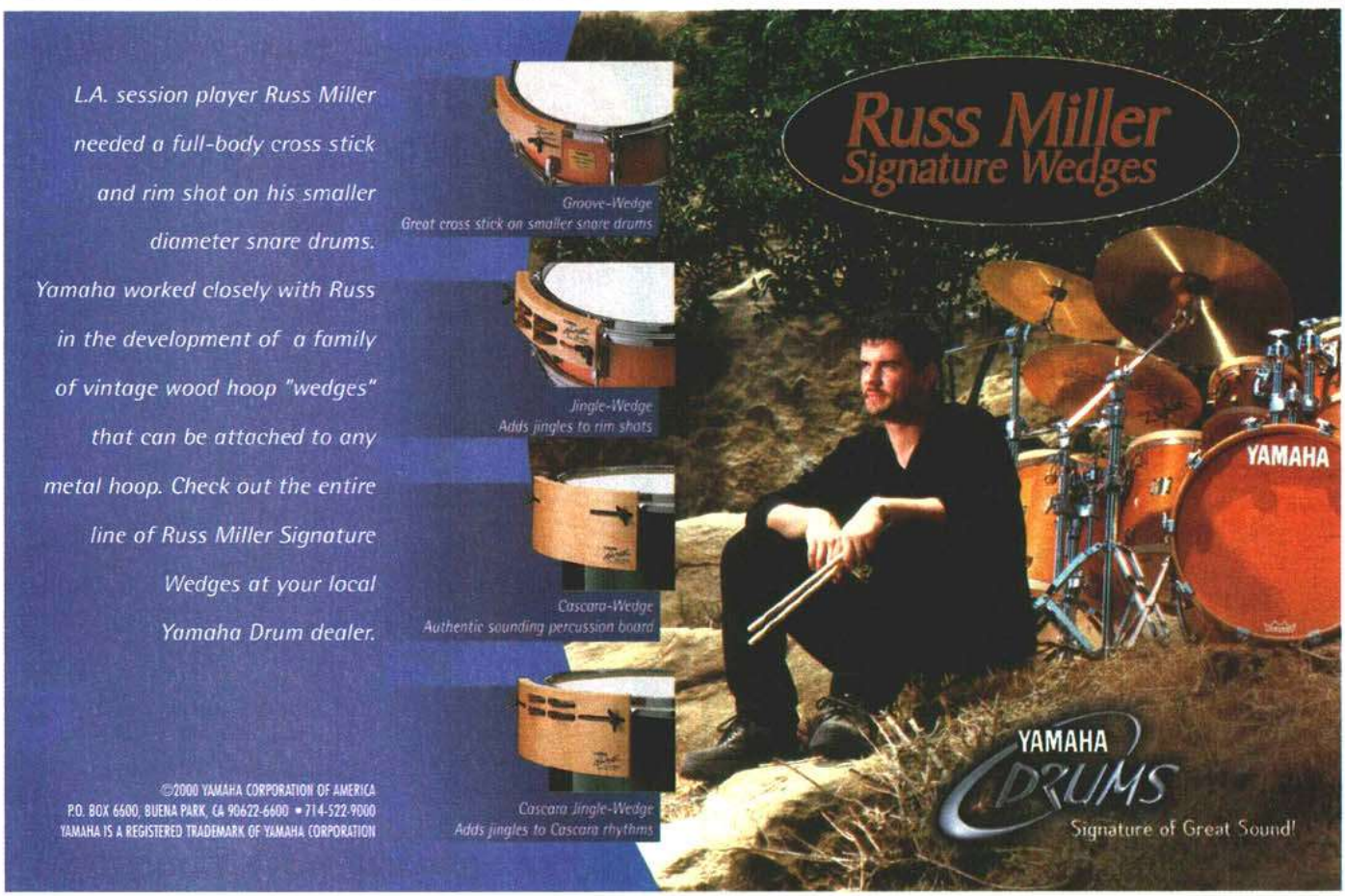
"These guys would play everything," Russ elaborates, "and I'd write it down and tape it. When I put together all my notes, I realized that I was analyzing what was required of the instruments in that music. They were not saying, Here's this pattern, but rather, The bass guitar is going to do this, and that is why I play this, or The piano may do this feel, and that's why it feels like this. So it was really an analysis of the music first, and then applying what these guys knew about playing the feel and the rhythms, to play that music effectively on the drumset."

All of the notes Russ compiled went into the drumset curriculum for the Miami Percussion Institute. That, in turn, became the basis for his first book, *The Drumset Crash Course* (Warner Bros. Publications). "My original approach involved teaching

eighteen different styles in an eighteen-month class. When I got it all together, that was the book. I took it to Warner Bros., and it's been real successful for them."

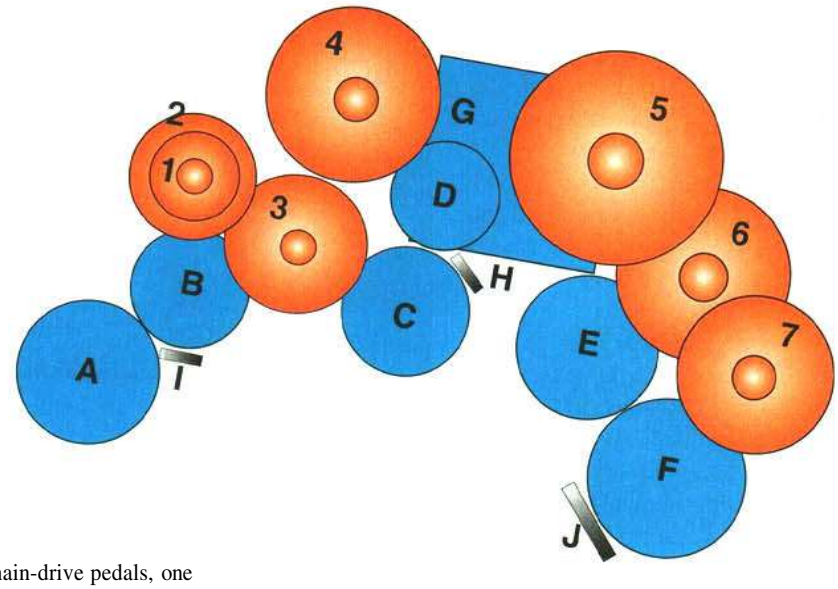
Russ's book and accompanying CD are just what the title says, a "crash course" covering a range of styles from basic jazz, rock, country, and funk to Brazilian and Afro-Cuban. An overview of the basics is given for each style so that a drummer can work with the book and quickly gain enough of a foundation to play gigs. A recently released video version features Russ playing all the musical examples in the book, as well as performing songs of the styles with his band. And a new "Play Along Package" features charts and written patterns to twenty styles, each with a full song, both with and without drums on the accompanying CDs. (For more information, check Russ's Web site, www.russmiller.com.)

Even with so much success, Russ knew that reaching his ultimate goal would require a move. "I was working a ton in Miami with pop and Afro-Cuban artists," he says. "I was making a good living, and I



Russ's Rig

Drums: Yamaha Maple Custom Vintage
A. 6½x10 maple timbale
B. 4x10 snare
C. 7x12 Bamboo snare
D. 7½x10 tom (with wood hoops)
E. 12x14 tom (with wood hoops)
F. 14x16 tom (with wood hoops)
G. 16x20 bass drum
H. Russ Miller Signature Groove Wedge
I. Russ Miller Signature Jingle Wedge
J. Russ Miller Signature Cascara Wedge



Cymbals: Zildjian
1. 6" A Custom Splash (upside down)
2. 13" Azuka Latin crash
3. 13" A Custom hi-hat top and Z hi-hat top (on bottom)
4. 18" K Constantinople crash
5. 22" K Constantinople ride
6. 18" K flat ride (brilliant) with one rivet
7. 16" A Zildjian & Cie Vintage crash

Hardware: Yamaha, including two FP-750 single chain-drive pedals, one of which is used with a CWH920 mounted cowbell holder to play an LP Jam Block

Heads: Remo clear Ambassadors on top and bottom of the 10" tom; Crimped Emperors on top and clear Ambassadors on bottom of the 14" and 16" toms; Suede Ambassador batter and Ambassador Snare-Side on the snare; Renaissance Powerstroke 3 bass drum batter, with Yamaha front logo head (kick muffled with either two Evans EQ pads or two medium-sized bath towels); Renaissance Diplomat on timbale

Microphones: Shure/May Beta 52 mounted inside bass drum; Shure SM57 outside and Shure/May XL57 inside snare drum (facing snares); Beta 98s on outside of toms and timbale; Shure/May Beta 52 inside 14" and 16" toms (facing batter head); SM 81 or KSM 32s for overheads

For more information on Russ's gear and on his book/video products, surf to www.RussMiller.com.

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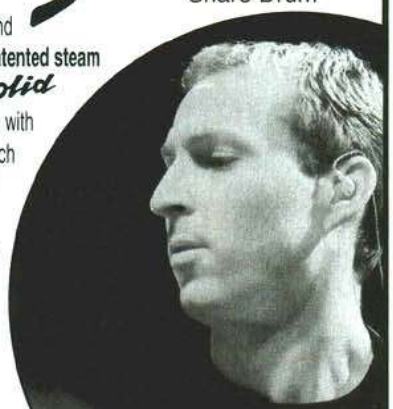

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could've stayed there the rest of my life. But I was not doing what I really wanted to do. To get to that next level you need to go where the artists are based, like New York, Nashville, or LA. That's just reality. So in July of 1996 I sold all my stuff, loaded my drums in my van, and drove across the country to LA."

Shortly after his arrival, Russ found himself living in his studio and eating Ramen noodles. "Although I did some clinics and got some publicity," he recalls, "it was a tough time. I was taking any kind of gig just to be playing. But if you always give 150% on a job, one gig will lead to a dozen. It's a building process. People like Alex Acuna, Zoro, and Will Kennedy were real helpful, opening doors for me. They'd tell producers and artists, This kid's good, give him a shot, and their word was worth a lot."

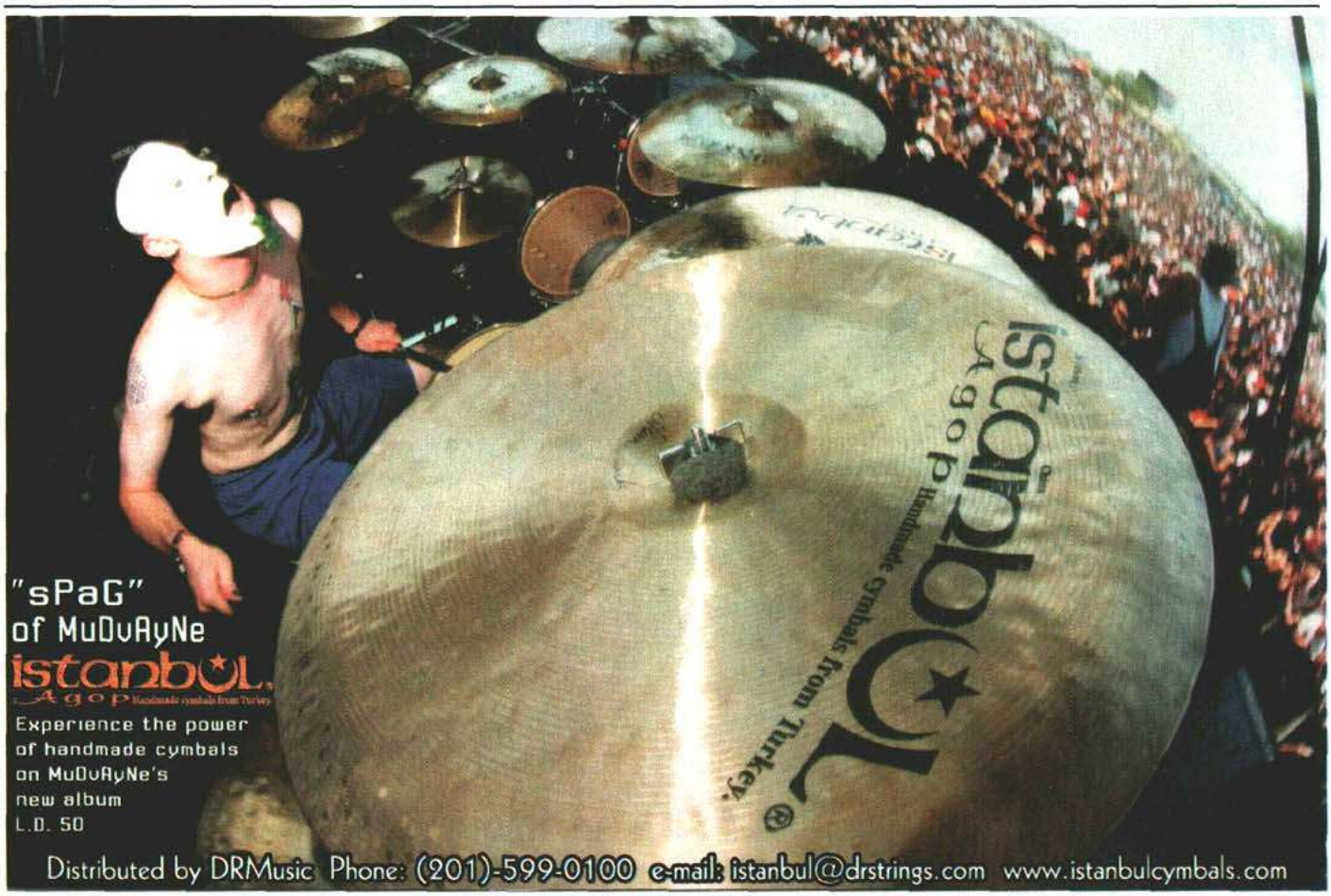
That building process has led Russ to gigs with such diverse artists as Ray Charleq, Rickie Lee Jones, Jim Brickman, and Slash from Guns N' Roses. "I do about seventy percent recording and thirty percent touring," says Russ. "The key is to get producers to call me first for everything they do. There's really no short road to building a clientele. I'm just trying to keep it going and pay the mortgage."

Russ has turned down some long tour engagements because they will take him out of the studio circuit for too long. "I have to consider whether the gig will pay enough to cover the time it will take me to get back into the circuit once I'm home again. When you're gone, producers and contractors will call someone else. So I do little four- to five-day tours with acts like The Fifth Dimension and A Taste Of Honey. I keep my cell phone turned on, and no one knows I'm away from home."

Besides his books and videos, Russ has recently made a name for himself in the area of product design. Yamaha has released a series of accessories dubbed the Russ Miller Signature Wedges. Says Russ, "I was doing a record for Nelly Furtado, using a 12" snare drum that the engineer and I both loved. But 12" is too small to get to the sweet spot for a cross-stick sound. I love the cross-stick sound of the maple hoop on my regular snare, and I wanted to get it on the 12" snare somehow. So in a lunch meeting with Yamaha we came up with this 'wedge' idea. The Groove Wedge is a small section of a wooden hoop that attaches to the rim of a snare drum. I also do a lot of hip-hop music on live drums, so I created the Jingle Wedge in order to be able to layer tambourine sounds with my cross-stick. Then there's the Cascara Wedge, which attaches to a drum and allows you to get a great "palito" sound, like a Latin timbale player."

Russ's most recent project is his CD, *Cymbalism.* "It's an achievement that I'm real proud of," he says. "Richie 'Gajate' Garcia plays percussion, and I did some of the writing. We really stretched out with the percussion instrumentation. I'd send Richie tapes of the tracks, and he would put his parts on. On some of the stuff I dug what he did so much I changed the drum tracks. What I think is especially exciting is that the whole band that did the album will be touring with me in Europe and the US in the near future."

Looking back, Russ is pleased with the path his career has taken. But he also believes that his experience proves that there are no short cuts to success. As he puts it, "If you're willing to walk the tough road, you'll get the benefit of it."



On The Road Again

Ayotte Travel Kit

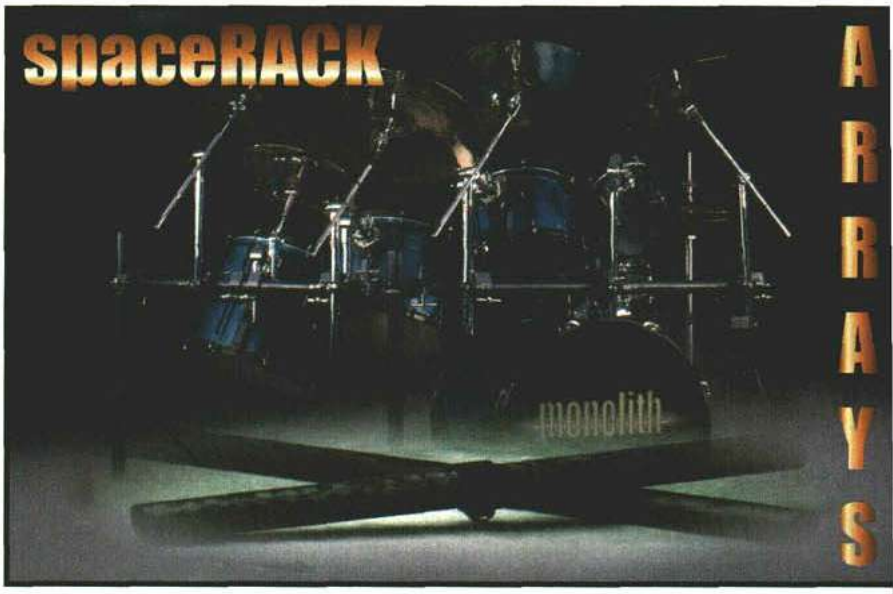
Ayotte's new compact Travel Kit is their entry in the "portable drumset" arena. With an 18x16 bass drum, 6x10 and 8x12 toms, and a 6-ply 5x13 snare, the kit is available with Ayotte's WoodHoops or conventional SteelHoops. The 16" bass drum uses conventional tom heads, and its front end is removable to allow the two toms to be stored inside for transport. It also features a quick-release fastening system that will not rattle if the drum is played with the front head removed. The Travel Kit is available in all Ayotte lacquer finishes.

Rack 'Em Up

Monolith SpaceRACK ARRAYS

Monolith Composite Corporation, makers of lightweight carbon-fiber drums, now offers spaceRACK ARRAYS. These lightweight alternatives to heavy steel racks feature slip-resistant mounting surfaces and are extremely easy to transport and set up. SpaceRACK tubing, weighing less than 20% of standard steel tubes, allows percussionists to lighten their load considerably. Four packaged arrays are available, each of which contains capped carbon-fiber tubing that matches standard rack lengths and configurations.

Besides the spaceRACK ARRAYS, complete rack systems and tubing in custom lengths can be purchased directly from Monolith Composite Corporation. Visit their Web site for complete product information.

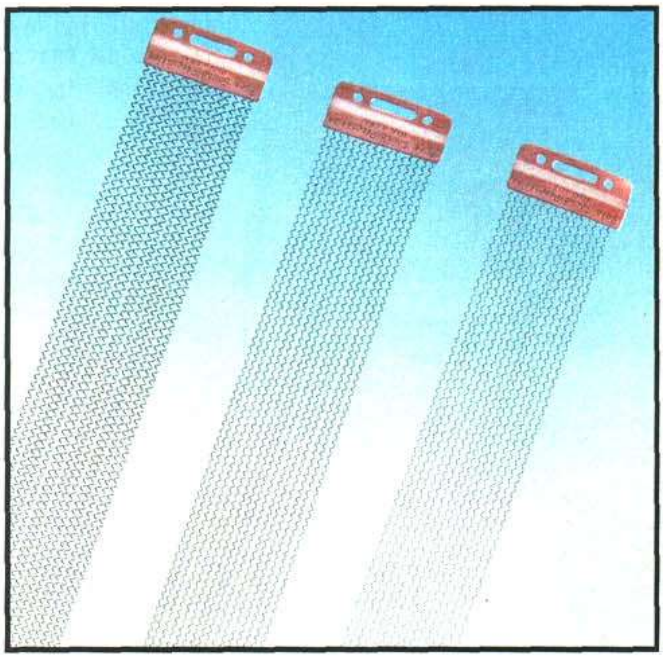


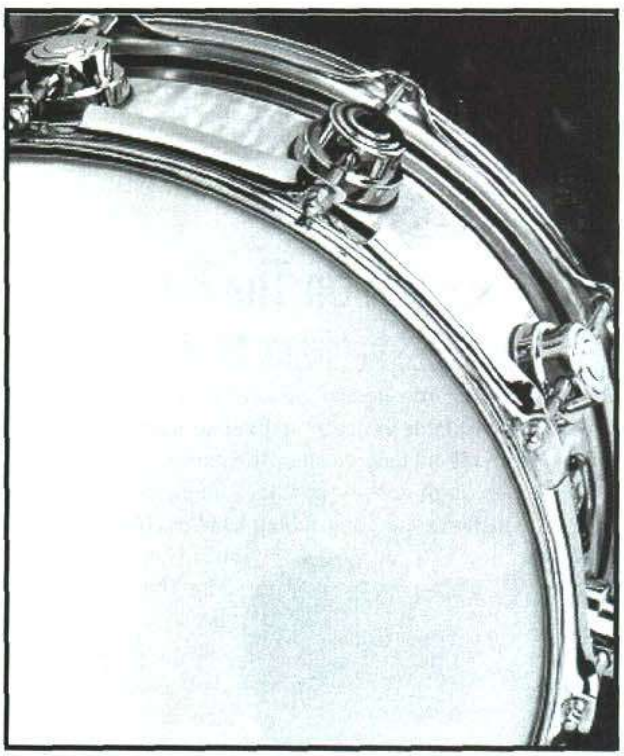
Snare A New Sound

PureSound Vintage, Custom, And Varitone Snares

PureSound Percussion has added to its Vintage and Custom snare wire collections with models for the Pearl FPS (Free Floating System), Slingerland Radio King, and Ludwig Super-Sensitive (1968 to present) snare drums. The new wires are designed to restore and improve the sound of these classic 14" drums. Prices range from $39.95 for the Free-Floating model to $59.95 for the Radio King and Super-Sensitive models.

PureSound also offers the Varitone snare wire system for 14" custom and production snare drums. Formulated to provide a wider variety of snare sounds and choices, the handcrafted snare wires are available in light, medium, and heavy sixteen-strand models. The snare sets are offered individually at $39.95 or as a three-pack at $99.95.





Why Jump Through Hoops To Change Heads?

Danmar J-Hoops And Double Kick Pads

Danmar's J-Hoops are made for the drummer who needs to change drumheads often, fast, and easily. With this design, tension rods need only be loosened a few turns so that the hoop can be rotated and removed, much like the lid of a quick-release jar or bottle. The 2.3 mm, heavy-gauge, chrome-plated, triple-flanged hoops are offered as a retrofit item for all ten-lug, 14" snare drums at $39.

Also new from Danmar is the Metal Double Kick Pad. Developed for use with all major brands of double bass drum pedals, the pad combines a high-grade aluminum-alloy playing surface with a thin, self-adhesive rubber backing to provide maximum durability and head protection. It's designed to create a distinctive bass drum sound with greater articulation and power, and is priced at $12.95.

Don't Let The Name Fool You

CAD Drum Microphones

In classic melodramas, "cad" was what the heroine called the villain. Well, the CAD Microphone company is no villain. In fact, they've joined the ranks of "heroic" manufacturers offering microphones specifically for use by drummers. The new 400 series includes the TSM 411 dynamic mic' (tailored for snare and tom use), the ICM 417 condenser mic' (for hi-hats, overheads, and percussion), and the KNM 412 kick mic'. Each model is available individually or as part of pre-pack combinations of three to six microphones. The DSM-1 silent drum-mounting system is also available in several kits.

Take That Copper!

DW Copper Snare Drums

After focusing on their wood drums for quite a while, Drum Workshop has introduced three sizes of Collector's Series Copper snare drums. The drums feature DW's coated batter head with recommended tuning sequence, drop-style throw-off, custom snare wires, and True-Pitch tuning system. The drums are designed to fit the needs of professional and semi-pro drummers, at $650 for the 5x14 size, $675 for the 6½x14, and $700 for the 4x14.

Get On The Kace

KACES Hardware And Gig Bags

Several new drum hardware and gig bags have been added to the KACES line. Bags are available in many individual sizes as well as configured pre-packs. Features include weather-resistant Cordura outer shells, tear-resistant linings, high-density padding, luggage-grade zippers, double-stitched edges, and rubber handles. Hardware bags are available in 36", 38", and 46" sizes. The two larger bags include heavy-duty wheels and thick plastic protection strips at the bottom, as well as an assortment of pockets and straps.

Made For Each Other

Yamaha Precision Marching Sticks And Chop Block Practice Pads

Yamaha's Precision 720 and Precision 655 marching drumsticks feature the same three-taper design for optimal balance and response. The 720 provides a full sound appropriate for any outdoor situation. The 655 has the same design as the 720, but is scaled down for a more articulate indoor sound or for smaller hands.

Chop Block snare drum pads are available in four different models. The two 7" versions are available as a double-sided pad or as a one-sided pad with mount. The two 9" models are available as a double-sided version or as a one-sided snare pad with a soft snare sound. All pads feature one medium-soft neoprene surface. The two-sided pads feature a hard black neoprene surface opposite the soft side. Both 7" models are priced at $29.95. The 9" Double Side is priced at $34.95, the 9" Single Side with Snare is priced at $47.95.

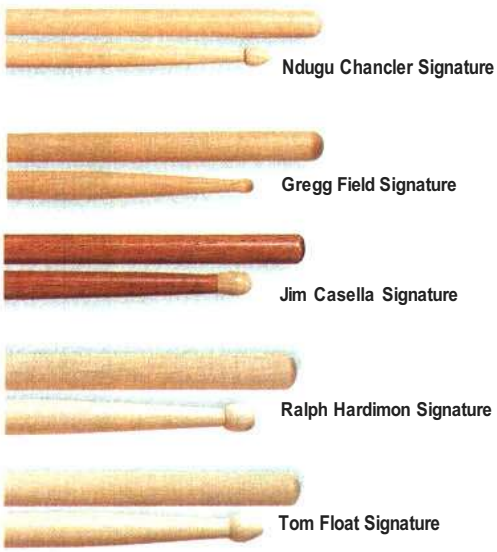
You Can't Keep A Good Stick Down

Vic Firth New And Reintroduced Models

The American Classic 5AN (hickory, 16" long, .565" diameter), American Classic 5BN (hickory, 16" long, .595" diameter), and American Custom SD5 Echo (maple, 15.75" long, .690" diameter) are all back in the Firth line after having been previously discontinued. Both of the American Classic models feature oval nylon tips and short tapers and are priced at $11.75. The SD5 Echo features a round tip, an extra-long taper, and a list price of $11.25.

Firth's new American Sound line offers 5A, 5B, 7A, 8D, 2B, and Rock hickory models with the exact same shaft and neck specifications of their American Classic counterparts, but with a full round tip. The idea is to provide drummers with a way to change the sound and color of their drums and cymbals without changing the feel and balance of their sticks. The new sticks are priced at $11.25 per pair.

In the area of new signature drumset sticks, the Ndugu Chancler hickory stick blends a 5A shaft with a 5B tip for more attack with less weight. It's priced at $12.75. The Gregg Field stick is similar to the Firth SD4, but features a thicker shaft. It's priced at $12.25.

For corp drummers, the Jim Casella hickory stick is designed for speed, balance, rebound, and snare response at all dynamic levels. The rounded tip blends into the neck and shoulder, and the taper is very long. The Ralph Hardimon indoor snare stick has a quick taper and barrel tip, and is designed for sound and articulation for indoor activities. The Tom Float indoor stick is also designed for indoor marching percussion, yet is versatile enough for a variety of snare and tenor applications. It features a full teardrop tip with a medium taper. List price for all three models is $13.75 per pair.

A Different Jungle Creature

New Sonor Jungle Kit And Snare

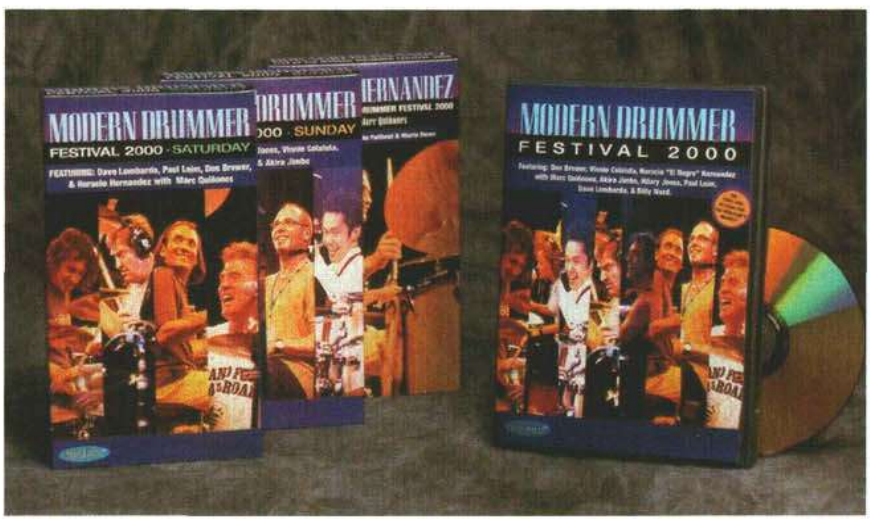
Due to its popularity among both jazz and drum 'n' bass players, Sonor has announced a new version of its Jungle Kit. The shell sizes remain the same as the previous incarnation (9x10 and 11x13 toms, 2x10 snare, 16x16 bass drum). But the snare now features a special throw-off and snare-adjustment mechanism, and the toms and bass drum are finished in a high-gloss lacquer.

The rack tom mounts on a Force Ball-Clamp system, while the floor tom has received new prism clamps and tom legs. Tuning lugs are fitted with the Sonor Tune-Safe system, which is designed to prevent detuning during playing. The kit comes complete with 400 series hardware, including a hi-hat stand, bass drum pedal, snare stand, boom cymbal stand, and straight cymbal stand.

The Jungle kit is available in indigo-purple, Caribbean blue-green, and black, at a retail price of $1,295. The Jungle snare is also available separately at $180.

Study The Masters

Hudson Music MD Fest, Buddy Rich, Drum Soloists, And Tito Puente Releases



By now you should know all about Hudson Music's release of three videos and one groundbreaking DVD of *MD's Festival Weekend 2000.* (If you don't, shame on you. Go immediately to www.moderndrummer.com for all the details.) But you may not know that Hudson has also released two archival videos: *Buddy Rich: At The Top* and *Classic Drum Solos And Drum Battles.* Both include rare (and sometimes never-seen) footage of some of the great drummers of history showing off their best stuff. Each video is priced at $24.95.

Also new from Hudson is a 192-page book/CD package called *Tito Puente's Drumming With The Mambo King.* This major instructional work is authored by noted drum writer Jim Payne, in collaboration with the late maestro himself. It features actual charts penned by Tito's arrangers, and is priced at $32.95.

Sounds Like A Kung Fu Movie

Rhythm Tech Piccolo Skratcher And Chopblocks

The Piccolo Skratcher is the younger brother of the traditionally-sized Skratcher mountable one-hand Cabasa, with a higher, more delicate sound. It features genuine hardwood construction, chrome hardware, the Rock Lock mounting system, and the ability to be mounted on any 3/8" rod. It's priced at $28.95.

Rhythm Tech's new Chopblocks are trapezoidal woodblocks whose design angles the block to put the "sweet spot" in a convenient location. Available in three sizes, each is sold with its own multi-position mounting system. Retail prices are: small—$37.95, medium—$40.95, large—$42.95.

Padding Your Account

The E Company's E-pad

In a departure from most marketing campaigns, the makers of the E-pad state that their pad will make your drumming *harder*. At least, it will give you a harder workout than gum rubber pads. The E-pad's Enduraflex playing surface is designed to respond slowly, almost like playing on a pillow. Such response is claimed to build "incredible endurance and speed." The pad is also claimed not to shock the fingers, wrists, or arms—thus "encouraging you to practice the same way you perform."

Three models are available. The Pro-Deluxe ($42.90) and Deluxe ($37) strap to your leg for practice-anywhere convenience. The All Around ($56 standard, $72 in custom wrap) can be used as a single-surface pad, or (in groups of three or more) atop a drumkit for a quiet practice session.

And What's More

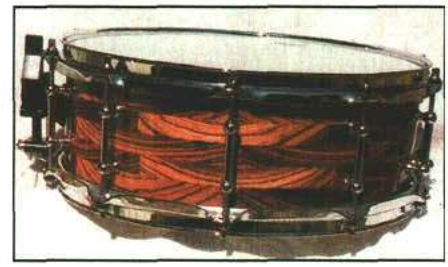
PEARL's new hand percussion line includes ten different models of cowbells. Each has a unique tone, due to precision argon-welded seams that introduce no foreign matter into the metal. The bells also include Pearl's exclusive PowerFlange edge and self-muffling internal strips.

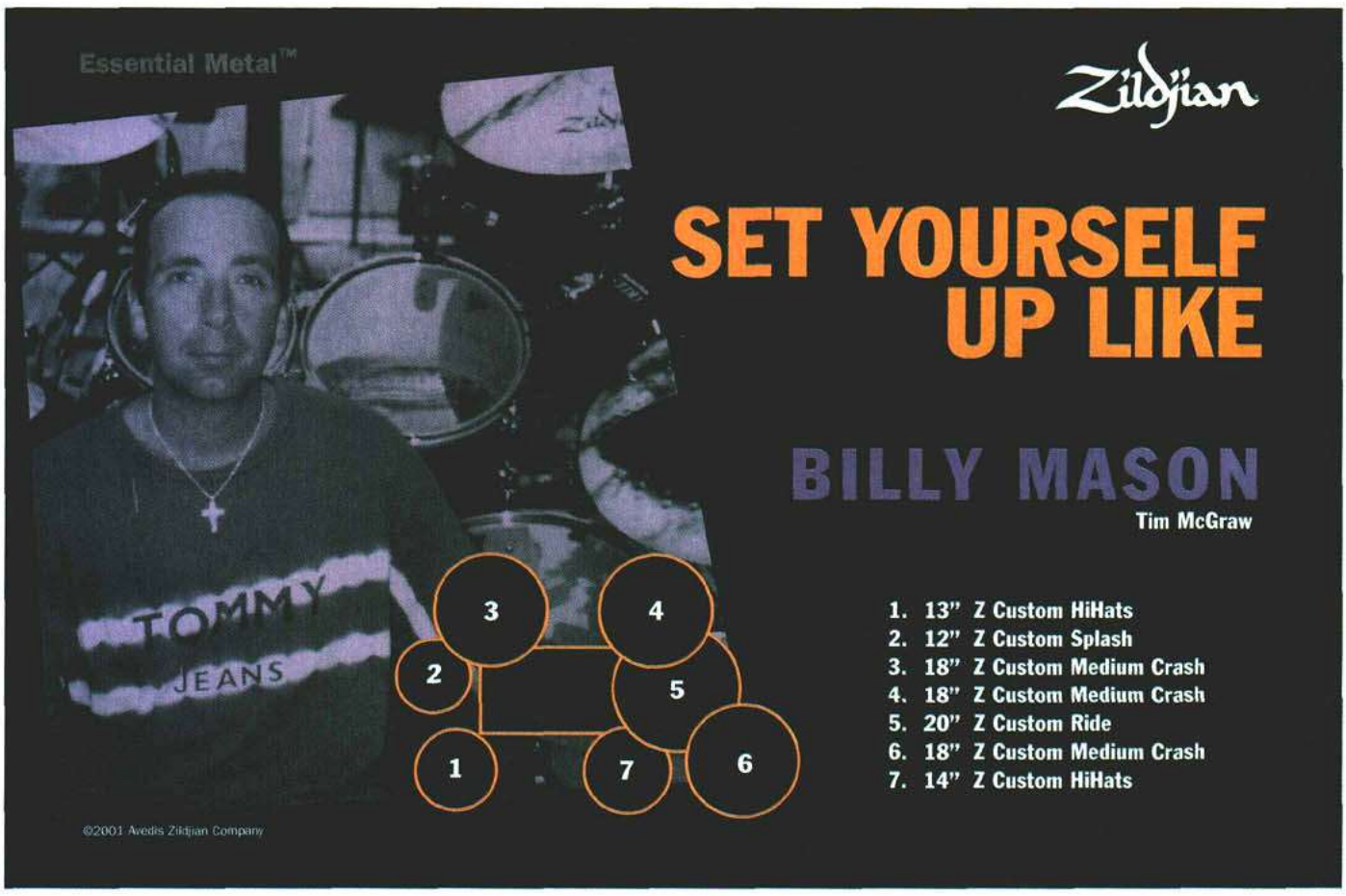
PERCUSSION CONCEPTS offers a line of stick bags, Cymbal Sleeves, and Holy Cow cowbell covers in a wide variety of animal print fabric. Cheetah, leopard, ocelot, zebra, and cow patterns are available for those looking for a "fashionable" way to protect their cymbals. Sizes and prices vary.

THE MUSIC REST offers their Backrest as an add-on to virtually any drum throne on the market. The Backrest features a thick, padded front, is height-adjustable, and attaches to the base of existing thrones. List price is $84.99 plus shipping and handling.

Carmen J. Cappella has a new line of sticks called—appropriately enough—**a CAPPELLA.** (Cute, eh?) Unlike other sticks on the market, a Capella sticks have rings of aluminum, rubber, or nylon wrapped around the tips of the sticks to create unique sounds. The a Cappella company also offers a wood-turning service to create custom-made drumsticks.

The DRUM SOLO line of over two dozen hardwood snare drums now includes a model hand-crafted entirely from Zebrawood. The drum comes equipped with Drum Solo's own machined-brass tube lugs. This model placed first in its class in the *Not So Modern Drummer* 2000 Snare Drum Olympics this past summer in Nashville.





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REGAL TIP has introduced two new Performer Series drumsticks. The Tim Adams Concert Snare Stick has a gradual taper on the neck and a large bead at the tip. The Randy Cooke model is similar to Regal's rock model but with added length (16¼) for extra reach. The Cooke has a short taper and a rounded bead for power and articulation. Retail price for both models is $11.50.

IN THE MOOD MFG. has developed a drumstick called the Flex Tip, which utilizes nylon extension arms to provide three nylon tips on each stick rather than just one. Each stick is guaranteed against the tips coming off, and different sizes are available on request. List price is $9.95 per pair.

Making Contact

a CAPPELLA (732) 564-0485. **AYOTTE** (877) 736-5111, www.ayottedrums.com. **CAD MICROPHONES** (800) 760-9266, www.cadmics.com. **DANMAR** (949) 756-8481. E **COMPANY** (818) 295-7627, www.epadco.com. **DRUM WORKSHOP** (805) 485-6999, (800) 453-7867, www.dwdrums.com. **HUDSON MUSIC** (888) 796-2992, www.hudsonmusic.com. **IN THE MOOD MFG.** (941) 358-1555. **KACES** (ACE PRODUCTS) (800) 950-1095. **MONOLITH COMPOSITE** (905) 689-6173, www.monolithdrums.com. **THE MUSIC REST** (718) 850-8989. **PACIFIC DRUMS AND PERCUSSION** (805) 485-6999, www. pacificdrums.com. **PEARL** (615) 833-4477, www.pearldrum.com. **PERCUSSION CONCEPTS** (973) 610-5161, www.percussionconcepts.net. **PURESOUND PERCUSSION** (310) 966-1176, www.puresoundpercussion.com. **RHYTHM TECH** (800) 726-2279, www.rhythmtech.com. **VIC FIRTH** (781) 326-3455, www.vicfirth.com. **YAMAHA BAND & ORCHESTRAL DIVISION** (for percussion accessories) (616) 940-4900, www.yamaha.com/band. **DRUM SOLO,** (415) 898-2647, www.drumsolo.cc. **REGAL TIP,** (716) 285-3546, www.regaltip.com.

The December 2000 Making Contact listing for **BIG BANG DISTRIBUTION** listed an incorrect phone number. The correct number is (800) 547-6401.

Sometimes it's the littlest things that make the biggest difference!

Grip Peddler is proud to introduce the new Z-Force signature bass drum pad. When it came time to design a polyurethane pad that would aid drummers in achieving bass drum speed, control and accuracy we enlisted the guy with the fastest and funkiest foot in the west.

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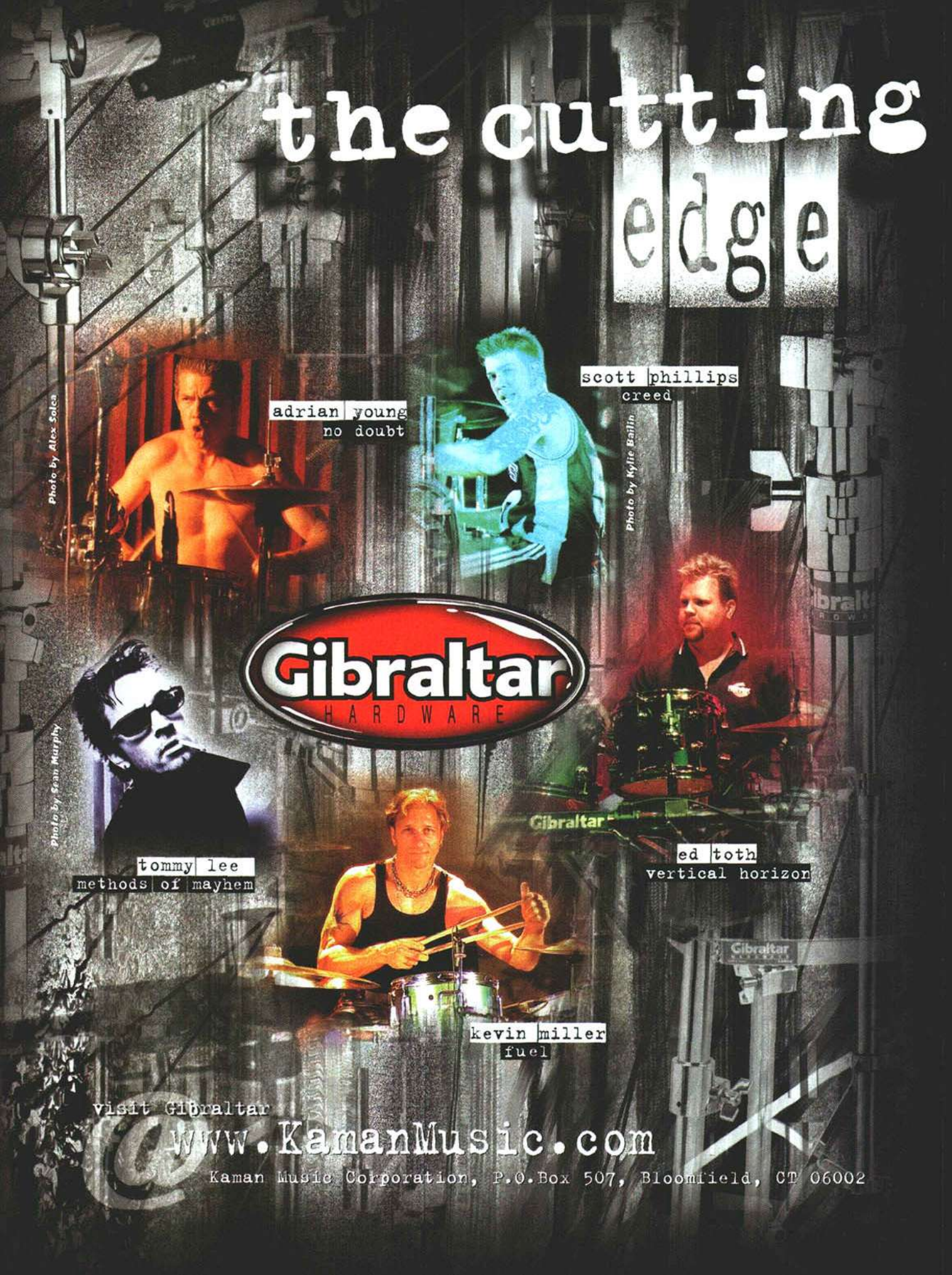
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New Yamaha Snare Drums

This Crop Of Unique Models Offers Lots Of "Firsts"

by Chap Ostrander

Stage Custom 5x10

Stage Custom 5x12

Stage Custom **5x13**

Hits

- Stage Custom snares offer modern sounds at affordable prices
- Paul Leim model is precise and responsive
- Bamboo models have light, clean look and excellent dynamic range
- JR model has distinctive size, appearance, and acoustic character

It seems like every drum company has been churning out signature and specialty snare drums in the past couple of years, and Yamaha is one of the leaders in that effort. We were sent a tasty sampling of drums in several price ranges and of various materials. Let's have a look at all this abundance.

Stage Custom Snares

Yamaha's entry-level Stage Custom series has developed a reputation for high-quality drums with features often found on higher lines. Now the line includes three small, "special-effect" snares—the first time Yamaha has offered such models in this price range. The combination of diameter and depth leads to a "crack" sound that allows the drums to fit well in modern styles of music like drum 'n' bass, trance, and jungle. If you play music of this type, even occasionally, you've probably found that a regular-size snare can't really be tuned up to the pitch needed to produce that kind of voice. These drums are designed to fill that gap—affordably.

The shells are constructed of plies of birch, Philippine mahogany, and falkata. The falkata ply is on the inside, on the theory that its smooth character will provide a reflective surface for the sound, along with the natural look of wood. Yamaha employs their Air Seal System to ensure that the shells will be round.

All the drums are 5" deep, with 8-ply, 7.3 mm shells with no reinforcing rings, 45° bearing edges, and 14-strand, high-carbon snares. One-piece lugs span the space between the rims. The 10" and 12" drums have six lugs; the 13" has eight. Standard Yamaha tom mounts fitted on the 10" and 12" drums allow them to be "flown" off a rack or clamped to a hi-hat or cymbal stand. Yamaha BA heads (made by Remo) are standard top and bottom. The drums are available in five attractive stained finishes that allow the wood grain to show through: Raven Black, Cranberry Red, Marina Green, Chestnut Stain, and Sapphire Blue.

Those are the general characteristics of all the drums. Let's examine how they sound individually.

5x10 (Sopranino), Cranberry Red, with tom mount. This is one high, cutting drum. Even so, it accepts a wide range of tuning for its size. I was surprised at how responsive it was to all volumes of playing. It didn't choke up no matter how hard I hit

it. Tuned lower, it retained lots of snare sound. The main feature of this drum is the quickness of the response. It would easily keep up in a live performance.

5x12 (Soprano) Green, with tom mount. This drum was interesting in that I could still hear the fundamental pitch it had with the snares off. As with the 10", this is a very sensitive snare. Tuning this one down brought it closer to the range of traditional snares. The underlying pitch was still there, however. Once again, the quick voice of this drum keeps it in the range for which it was intended.

5x13 (Piccolo), Raven Black, stand-mounted. I really liked this drum. I first tested it in a traditional setting, where I would tend to use my "regular" snare. It fit the bill at all dynamic levels, but it was capable of producing a higher pitch than my normal snare. So it really cut through if I opened it up. The black stain is very dark, looking almost like a lacquer finish from a distance. Closer inspection lets you see the grain through it, though. It's a rich look to accompany a substantial sound.

Paul Leim Signature Snare

The Paul Leim Signature snare is a mix of winning components. Take a 1.2 mm brass shell, chrome-plate it, and add gold-plated one-piece lugs, 30-strand stainless-steel snares, and 3 mm die-cast zinc hoops. A smooth side-release strainer and an adjustable butt plate top off the package. The chrome plating on the hoops almost looks like a black chrome finish. Yamaha states that the chrome finish on the shell helps to tighten the tone. Yamaha BA heads are standard, top and bottom.

Each drum came with a Yamaha muffling ring. Personally, I think that muffling rings take off too much overtone. I'd prefer to have a slightly ringy snare and use less drastic means to trim off the tones, like small bits of tape.

Anyone fortunate enough to have been at the last *Modern Drummer* Festival heard Paul Leim *kill* the audience with the depth of his experience and the lovely sound of his kit. Foremost of those drum sounds was the snare. As Paul said during his conversation with the audience, "It's not just what you play, but how precisely you play it." His signature drums provide that precision, with the inherent warmth of a brass shell pulled into greater crispness due to the chrome finish. Very responsive and clean.

I loved the 5½" drum, with its sharpness and crackling response. It would work great for all-around playing. If, however, you want a slightly deeper voice, you could go for the 6½" instead. The response is still there. Either way, you won't be disappointed.

Bamboo Snares

Yamaha has found a way to work bamboo into thin sheets, which form the plies of this new shell design. They use six plies to create a 6 mm shell with 45° bearing edges and no reinforcing rings. Ten small lugs are used for each head, minimizing contact with the shell. Each lug is held onto the shell with one bolt. Yamaha BA heads are fitted top and bottom. The H-type strainer is on the release side, and a simple solid butt plate is on the other. The choice of 2.3 mm pressed-steel DynaHoops is a good one for this drum, since they open and brighten the sound.

Speaking of sound, the sound of the bamboo drums is surprising. The drums are light and clean-looking, and their finish is impeccable. Well, their sound matches their look. The snare response is quick at all volumes, and the character of the sound stays consistent. My favorite was the 5½" drum, certainly for drumset use. The 6½" snare was louder and deeper, as you'd expect. But it still possessed the crack and response of the smaller drum. It's interesting that the voices of both drums stayed open from quiet to loud playing. I couldn't get them to choke. And the pitch from each was lively and clean, even with the snares off.

A percussionist friend of mine, who is also a premier mallet maker, expressed concern about the strength of the shell, given the brittle nature of bamboo. When I asked Dave Jewell of Yamaha about that, he told me that the shell is produced using their Air Seal System, which gives the shell strength. Additionally, Yamaha has marketed guitars made of bamboo for over a year, with no reported problems. The drums come with a full three-year warranty on the shells, so Yamaha obviously has confidence in them.

When I heard that Yamaha was coming out with a bamboo snare drum, my first reaction was, "Great. With all the shell selections already out there in the world, do we really need snare drums made out of bamboo?" Man, was I wrong! Not only does bamboo make a great-sounding drum, but it's environmentally friendly. It grows in abundance throughout the tropics. No rain forests are threatened, no spotted owls are losing their homes. I guess the only danger with a bamboo drum is that a panda might munch on it—and how likely is that?

JR Robinson Signature Snare

John "JR" Robinson wanted his snare to be unique, and he certainly accomplished his goal. First of all, the drum is 15" in diameter and 5" deep. The shell is all birch, and it's only four plies thick. There are 4-ply reinforcing rings inside, and the edges are cut at 35°. Ten individual lugs serve each head. Their small size decreases the amount of contact with the shell. The drum is finished in a wrap called White Gold.

As with the Paul Leim drum, the JR snare has the H-type side-release strainer with the G-type strainer on the butt end. Topping off the ensemble is a new head design from Remo, an Emperor with a white dot on the playing surface. A Remo Ambassador snare-side head is on the bottom.

The hoops are Yamaha 19-ply wood models. The holes in the hoops are countersunk so that the tension rods are below the surface (so you don't have to worry about your sticks making contact with them). When playing the drum for the first time, I was a little skeptical of how the wood hoops would hold up. I soon found that there was nothing to worry about. The hoops are strong and durable, and rimshots played on them sounded solid and powerful. The hoop is beveled in slightly toward the head. This provides a flat surface for the sticks so that they don't make contact with a sharp corner while playing rimshots. This unusual shape—and the overall look of the thick wood hoop—adds to the somewhat massive look of the drum.

A wood hoop is much more flexible than a steel or die-cast hoop. When I first received the JR snare to review, it looked as though the last person to tune it had tightened down three of the lugs on the bottom head and left the others alone. The result was that the hoop looked like a small-scale roller coaster. But it flattened out fine once I tuned the head evenly. The 25-strand, high-carbon steel snare wires ride on snare beds that are 2.7 mm wide (as opposed to Yamaha's standard 1.8 mm beds). The idea of the wider bed is to keep the drum from vibrating sympathetically with other drums around it. To be honest, I didn't find a huge difference between the response of the JR snare and several others when a nearby tom was struck.

This is a drum with a distinct sound—obviously tailored for the studio. The combination of a thin shell and a 15" diameter gives it greater depth than other 5" drums. The brightness of the package gives it more snap than most 5x14 drums, and certainly more than other birch-shell drums I've worked with. Generally a birch drum is dry and articulate. This drum has that great articulation, but with lots of tone as well. Just like JR wanted, it's truly a unique drum.

Summing Up

The new Stage Custom snares are real winners. They sport good-looking finishes, they sound great, and their prices make them affordable. The Bamboo drums are a pleasant surprise, with an admirable sound and a distinct look. The Paul Leim snare is a composite of known elements, but in an interesting configuration. It has all the qualities of a brass snare, but with a unique look. The JR Robinson snare is a fairly radical design, but Yamaha makes it work. It sounds and looks great. All these new models are definitely worth checking out.

A Smorgasbord Of Snares

Paul Leim Signature

5½x14	$850
6½x14	$890

Bamboo

5½x14	$580
6½x14	$580

JR Robinson Signature

4x15	$690

Stage Custom

5x10	$160
5x12	$170
5x13	$180

New Zildjian Cymbals

Let's... Do... The Time Warp... Again!

by Chap Ostrander

Modern Drummer's readers named Zildjian as the "Most Innovative Cymbal Company" in the last *MD* Consumer Poll, and it's easy to understand why. Zildjian is constantly moving forward in its development of cymbal lines. But at the same time, they cherish the history of the instrument and their place in its development. As a result, the selection of cymbals in this review includes sounds from the past, present, and future. Here's a quick rundown of this eclectic mix.

Hits

- New thinner Z Custom crashes are powerful yet musical
- Oriental Crash Of Doom offers very trashy and dark undertones
- A Zildjian & Cie models have classic sound of the '60s

Z Custom

In a bold stroke, Zildjian has revamped the entire Z Custom line. They're still made of cast-bronze alloy, they still utilize computer-guided hammering, and they're still designed for high-volume situations. But the new Z Customs include crashes that are lighter in weight, making them faster, brighter, and more responsive. They also utilize new hammering patterns and shapes. The trademark spiral hammering patterns and shapes give them a sig-

nature look and sound. One improvement to the visual aspect of the line is a redesigned logo, which is stylish and up-to-date. The line is only offered in brilliant finish.

Z Customs are favored by such players as Lars Ulrich, Taylor Hawkins, and Ray Herrera. Zildjian says that the new models have more cutting power and greater volume output than the previous line, but because of their reduced weight are now more versatile. All of the cymbals I tested certainly had big voices, with plenty of brightness and cutting power. But though they were loud cymbals, their voices were very musical—pleasing to hear and to play. I've heard many "rock" models that were little more than round plates of metal. The Z Customs could find a home in many situations other than loud rock.

20" and 22" **Heavy Rides.** In keeping with the qualities of the Z Custom line, these are bright ride cymbals. Their weight gives them great stick definition. While playing ride patterns I found that an underlying spread built up, but it stayed under control and didn't interfere with the distinctiveness of the ride pattern. The 20" was higher in pitch than the 22", and the bell sound on both was clear and strong—as long as the bell was played strongly with the shoulder of the stick. Using the tip of a stick wasn't quite as satisfying.

16" and 18" Medium Crashes. These are very musical crashes. That's not to say that they won't cut through brick walls of surrounding sound. I just enjoy the fact that they sound good while doing so. That sound is full-bodied and rich, with quick, clean response.

The weight of these models could allow them to be used as rides in the right setting. When I played ride patterns on them, they didn't really build up spread underneath. Very satisfying! The bell on the 16" is smaller than you would expect for a crash of that size. Still, the bell sounds on both sizes were clear and cutting.

16" and 18" Medium-Heavy Rock Crashes. The Rock Crashes are similar to the Mediums, with the main difference being that they possess a higher fundamental pitch. The bell on the 16" is of proportionate size to the 18", and they are both killers. The weight of these cymbals allows you to think of riding on them as well.

18" China. This medium-thin model isn't quite as trashy as I would prefer in a China cymbal. But remember, this is a line that prides itself on cutting power and highs. You get some of the wash that you want from a China, but the stress here is on volume. So the Z Custom China is a compromise between musical and piercing.

14" Hi-Hats. With their medium-heavy top and heavy bottom, these hi-hats are loud, bright, and cutting—in keeping with the rest of the line. They are also versatile enough to be played in other genres. You get great stick response when playing on them closed. The wash is smooth and even when you leave them slightly open. The "chick" sound is sharp and clean.

12" Splash. I'm not sure I would call this a "splash" in the purest sense of the word. It is definitely a small, fairly thin cymbal that works well to create punctuating accents. I'm just accustomed to thinner, smaller splash cymbals. But precisely because this cymbal is a little beefier, it would fit nicely in a heavy rock setting. Its bright, cutting voice is full and powerful, and it responds well to choking. You could also think of this as a small accessory crash.

Re-Mix 13" Jungle Hats

This is the latest edition to Zildjian's ultra-hip Re-Mix line, developed in conjunction with drum 'n' bass specialist Zach Danziger. Six tambourine jingles are attached to the top and bottom cymbals, providing an undercurrent of white noise and a sharpening of the sound. True to their Re-Mix lineage, they have a high cutting voice that fits in well with electronic music. At 13" they're slightly smaller than I'm used to, but their sound was still full, with nice, tight stick definition. Played closed, they blended in with my regular cymbal setup. When I opened them up slightly, the jingle sound blended in. The chick sound was also augmented by the jingles. It wasn't quite like laying a tambourine on the top cymbal, but the jingles' effect could definitely be heard.

The best aspect of this setup is that, because the jingles are tied to a hi-hat, they can be fully controlled with one's foot. Since I'm more of a club date and show player, I don't think I'd choose these as my primary hi-hats. However, I'd love to use them with a remote pedal so that I could call on them for accents and patterns.

15" Mastersound Hi-Hats

Mastersound hi-hat models in 13" and 14" sizes are already available in the A, A Custom, and K series. The outer edge of the bottom cymbal is hammered to create a rippled effect that allows air to escape when the cymbals are closed. This, in turn, eliminates the possibility of air lock.

The 15" size is new to the A series. The top cymbal is medium weight; the bottom is heavy. This is a great set of hi-hats! The chick sound is tight and clean, and the pair is very responsive. There is increased interaction between them when played slightly open, and the sound is full-bodied. I loved the feel of playing them.

New ZBT Cymbals

The ZBT line features what Zildjian terms "sheet bronze" cymbals. The innate sound quality of the bronze alloy, along with a special hammering pattern, give this series high, cutting power. The line is offered in brilliant finish only, and is priced to be affordable for younger players.

8" Splash. This splash has a quick voice that will punch your accents through whatever playing environment you're in. It's a paper-thin cymbal that speaks quickly and decays just as fast. It also sounds good when you choke it by hand. The recommendation from Zildjian is that it makes a great first splash. For the price, I'd say, "Jump in!"

18" China. This cymbal epitomizes the qualities of the ZBT line. It's very bright, loud, and cutting. The voice is intense and quick to speak, with an equally quick decay. (I gave it a preliminary hard shot with a stick, and had to go and glue one of my ears back on.) It didn't respond well to light mallet work—it really wanted to be played harder. When it was, it sang out. This China would cut through just about anything, and the price makes it especially affordable for students.

Oriental Crash Of Doom

Dennis Chambers came to the Zildjian folks a few years ago with the idea for this exotic cymbal design. What emerged was the most recent addition to the Zildjian Sound Effects range, which includes the Azuka, Re-Mix, Zil-Bel, EFX, and Oriental lines. The 20" cymbal is given a special hammering, followed by a lathing process that removes mass. This gives the cymbal unique flexibility.

In a nutshell, the Crash Of Doom is amazing! It's low in pitch and high in rewards. Just touch it, and it responds with very trashy and dark undertones. Hit it with the tip of the stick, and you get heat. Hit it with the shoulder, and you get fire. Play the bell, and the furnace burns beneath you. Mallet response is also great: The sound builds from a low moan to a full roar, with loads of control. As you play louder, the fun really starts. The low tones continue, and the highs kick in. It takes a while to hit the ceiling.

Because the Crash Of Doom is a thin cymbal, stick response for riding is not too good. But you might want to coax it anyway, because in the right situation—like a low-volume jazz setting or some avant-garde gig—it can offer an absolutely unique character. In fact, this cymbal actually fuels one's creativity. No wonder it got a Gear Of The Year award from *MD* in the December 2000 issue!

K Custom Dry Light Rides

These new medium-thin ride models in the venerable K Custom line provide an interesting mix of flavors: dark, and full of warm undertones. As I played ride patterns, the underlying spread rose but stayed under control, even at louder volume levels. Stick definition was clear and dry, and the medium-thin weight allowed me to be creative with where I placed the stick on the cymbal to achieve

different sounds.

The 20" ride had a higher pitch than the 22". The bell sound on both was rich and clear, and great for accents. The only criticism I have is that the bell on the 20" is fairly small, making it a more difficult target. The bell on the 22" is a bit more proportionate to the overall size of the cymbal.

When I crashed the cymbals for accents, the sound was very full—almost gong-like. Brush work was light, airy, and very satisfying.

A Zildjian & Cie Vintage Crashes

Created under the direction of Armand Zildjian, these cymbals epitomize the very thin A Zildjian crashes turned out by the original Zildjian factory in Quincy, Massachusetts in the 1930s. They hark back to the days when Armand's father, Avedis, designed the first real crash cymbals for players like Gene Krupa, Chick Webb, and Jo Jones. Word is that they can only be produced in batches of forty at a time, so the supply will be limited. The cymbals are allowed to age for two months in Zildjian's vault before they're even tested. They're called "Vintage" crashes because the company used the trademark of "A Zildjian *&* Cie" for quite a while in the US back in the early days.

So what *is* that classic sound? It's a voice that's full and rich, yet quick and bright, with a fast attack and decay. These characteristics allowed me to play stunning accents and punctuations.

The pitch of our test crashes went down as the size increased. When I used mallets on the 15" and 16" sizes, they were really happy with the idea. The 14" spoke right away, but reached the ceiling immediately. (As a sidelight, my wife took the crashes on a symphonic gig, and loved their sound and response.)

The A Zildjian & Cie line is pure history, and a delight to work with. Along with the Sweet Hats described below, they should especially appeal to those with an appreciation for the roots of drumming.

Sweet Hats

How sweet they are! These hats are also designed by Armand Zildjian. His goal was to create hi-hats that were lighter in weight than most contemporary models and that had that "old washy sound." It took a special hammering and lathing process applied to fairly lightweight 15" cymbals to make it all happen. The size allows the pair to generate maximum contact so that they have a great "wash" sound.

Whether I played them loose or tight, the Sweet Hats sounded great. I got lots of interaction when I played them slightly open. When I opened and closed them in a jazz setting, they produced an almost nostalgic big band/small group feel. At the same time, I also heard the sound of music recorded in the 1960s, when there weren't so many esoteric choices in cymbal models. I thoroughly enjoyed playing the Sweet Hats—maybe because my playing dates back to the '60s. Well, the late '60s, anyway.

Conclusion

Zildjian has made some great moves with these new lines and models, acknowledging tonalities that are cutting-edge along with those that are decades old. I have to say that I applaud the return to lighter-weight cymbals. It's been frustrating to shop for cymbals and find that the stores only stock the heavier weights because of their high survival factor. I'd love to have these new models to pick from the next time I go shopping. The problem is, where do you stop?

Catching Some Zs

Z Custom Series	
12" Splash	$157
13" Hi-Hats and Dyno Beat Hi-Hats (pair)	$348
14" Hi-Hats and Dyno Beat Hi-Hats (pair)	$392
16" Medium Crash and Rock Crash	$237
17" Medium Crash and Rock Crash	$260
18" Medium Crash and Rock Crash	$280
19" Medium Crash and Rock Crash	$302
18" China	$292
20" China	$333
20" Ride and Power Ride	$320
21 "Mega Bell Ride	$350
22" Ride and Power Ride	$382
A Zildjian & Cie Vintage Crashes	
14" Crash	$260
15" Crash	$283
16" Crash	$310
15" A Zildjian Sweet Hats (pair)	$430
ZBT Models	
8" Splash	$ 58
18" China	$121
K Custom Dry Light Rides	
20" Ride	$415
22" Ride	$492
Sound Effects & Mastersound	
20" Oriental Crash Of Doom	$333
13" Re-Mix Jungle Hats (pair)	$348
15" Mastersound Hi-Hats (pair)	$430

Meinl Collection Series Bongos

Old And New Worlds Meet

by Victor Rendon

This is my second opportunity to review Meinl percussion products. Once again I'm impressed by the care that goes into their construction and with the innovation exhibited by their design. A total of five pairs of Collection Series bongos were sent for review. A careful visual inspection quickly revealed excellent workmanship on all five.

Meinl's Collection Series offers shells in eleven different wood types. Six are made in Germany and are designated as German Wood models. These include beech, sycamore maple, moor oak, mountain elm, walnut, and wild cherry. Five models are made in Thailand of woods designated as "foreign": rosewood, American white ash, khasia pine, teak, and redwood. All Collection Serieq models are finished in matte lacquer. In addition, they all feature Meinl's exclusive Free Ride Suspension System. (More about that later.)

The bongos in our review group were tested under practical applications. They were played as part of a complete rhythm section that included congas and timbales, on gigs with a band that performs salsa and Latin jazz.

German Wood Models

The factory that manufactures the German Wood models is a family-owned company that has been making handcrafted wood products for generations. Again, the quality and craftsmanship on our test drums was exemplary. The first pair I tried was made of walnut; the second was of wild cherry.

Walnut

On each pair of bongos the smaller drum (macho) has a head diameter of 7", while the larger drum (hembra) has a 9" diameter, which is slightly larger than on traditional bongos. The shells have a contour that curves inward a bit, making the center of each shell significantly thinner than the top and bottom. Meinl calls this their Resonance Shaping Area. The tops of the shells have a rounded edge to help seat the drumhead; the bottoms have a straight edge.

Hits

- Free Ride suspension system allows shells to vibrate more freely
- all "macho" (small) drums sound crisp, and cut through amplification

Misses

- "hembra" (large) drums on the German wood models sound "tinny" in isolation
- Free Ride suspension system makes German Wood models longer than normal, which may affect playing comfort

Wild Cherry

The drums are fitted with Meinl's TTR traditional-style rims and chrome hardware, Cuban-style steel bottoms, and TrueSkin cowhide heads held with four lugs. Each set of bongos comes with an L-shaped tuning rod.

Both pairs of bongos had no problem projecting in a band situation. The smaller head cut through effortlessly, with a crisp, popping sound. Open tones and slaps on the small drum were easy to execute, and they sounded very good on both pairs.

The larger head on both pairs was adequate in a band environment but sounded a little "tinny" in isolation. This may be due to the thin skin that came with the drums, rather than to their construction. Other than that, both sets of bongos worked very well within the percussion section.

Quick Looks

EMMite Drumsticks

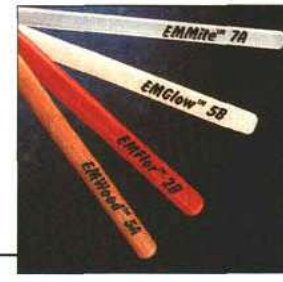
Synthetic drumsticks are nothing new. Numerous brands have come and gone since the late 1970s, and a few have become fairly well established. Their primary selling points are consistency and improved durability over wood. EMMite drumsticks certainly offer those familiar advantages. But they also offer a characteristic that *is* new: health benefits.

EMMite sticks are made of a plastic that utilizes "oriented polymer" technology. This means that the plastic molecules align from the tip to the butt end of the sticks, giving the sticks the stiffness and feel of wood sticks. (Previous attempts to make plastic sticks failed because the sticks felt "whippy"—too flexible. EMMite claims this was the result of molecules that ran in all directions.) EMMite sticks aren't molded; they're actually lathed out of plastic dowels, the same way wood sticks are made.

The wood-like feel of the EMMite sticks is accompanied by shock-absorption properties that are superior to wood sticks. This is borne out by a study published in *Medical Problems Of Performing Artists, a* scientific newsletter. The study ran comparative vibration tests on wood and oriented-polymer (OP) sticks, and found that the OP sticks stopped vibrating much sooner than wood sticks after the two were tapped with equal force. It concluded that the OP sticks could be of benefit in reducing the risk of carpal tunnel syndrome.

I've also received testimonial letters praising EMMite sticks from drummers who had been suffering from various hand problems. In fact, one drummer who had been told he would never play again now gigs regularly using the EMMites.

My most impressive personal test of EMMite sticks took place not at *MD's* testing lab, but at last summer's NAMM show in Nashville. At the invitation of EMMite's president, John France, I picked up a popular name-brand 5A drumstick made of hickory, and tapped it firmly on a slab of marble. As you might expect, the shock I felt in my hand and wrist was substantial. Then I did the same thing with an EMMite



Foreign Wood Models

Like their German cousins, the Thailand-made bongos have small drums with 7" diameters. But their larger drums are a bit smaller than the German-wood models, at 8½". The shells have the Resonance Shaping Area inward-curve contour, along with round bearing edges at the top and bottom. The drums are fitted with Meinl's SSR rims (Safe And Sound Rims), which are curved for player comfort. The drums also feature gold-toned hardware, Cuban-style steel bottoms, TrueSkin cowhide heads held with four lugs, and an L-shaped tuning rod.

I tested khasia pine, white ash, and rosewood models. All three projected well in a band situation. On each model the smaller drum cut through effortlessly, with a crisp, popping sound. As with the German Wood drums, open tones and slaps on the small drums sounded very good and were easy to play. The larger drum on these pairs fared much better, with a full, warm sound. In fact, all the sounds from these bongos were compact, crisp, and lively.

These bongos are also a joy to look at. They're beautifully made, and each wood type offers a nice contrast to the hardware.

The Free Ride Suspension System

Traditional bongos have a block of wood holding the two drumshells together, by means of a bolt that passes through the two shells and the block. Our test bongos employ a new system designed by Meinl, which they call the Free Ride Suspension System. It consists of a molded nylon centerpiece that attaches to the bottom rim of each drum, instead of to the drums' shells. This system allows each shell to vibrate more freely.

Free Ride Suspension System

The centerpiece of the Free Ride connection causes a rather large gap between the drums. This, in turn, makes the overall length of the German Wood bongos 19", which is 2" longer than average. The new system undoubtedly enhances the acoustic performance of the bongos, but it has the potential to make them uncomfortable when played in the traditional "between-the-knees" position. To be fair, though, when I asked a few players what they thought about this, nobody seemed to mind. Some thought that at worst it might be a minor inconvenience that would take some getting used to.

Owing to the contour and smaller size of the Foreign Wood shells, the centerpiece of the Free Ride connection doesn't cause as large a gap as with the German Wood models. This keeps the drums closer, minimizing hand movement between drums and making them more comfortable for seated players to hold between the knees.

Conclusion

The Collection Series bongos offer outstanding construction quality and a wide variety of wood choices. The Free Ride system is an innovative feature that helps give the drums excellent acoustic performance. With these beautiful drums, Meinl continues its progress toward becoming a real contender in the world percussion market.

Collector's Items

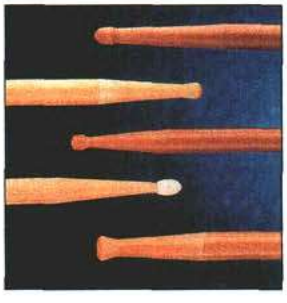
Meinl Collection Series Bongos

Khasia pine	$399	Walnut	$549
American white ash	$429	Wild Cherry	$549
Rosewood	$469		

5A. What a difference! The shock was less than that of playing a wood stick on a standard gum-rubber practice pad.

When I did play with the sticks on my kit, I found that they took a little getting used to. At first they didn't feel as "rigid" as my regular wood sticks. But later I realized that there was no genuine lack of rigidity. What was missing was the shock factor that I was used to feeling. Once I focused my perception on the feel of the EMMites, I became very comfortable with them. And even after only half an hour of playing, I could tell that I had experienced less impact stress than usual.

I've played several types of synthetic sticks, and while I could get used to their feel, I couldn't get used to their sound on cymbals. (I've never really heard much difference on drums.) Even though the EMMites are made of plastic, their sound on cymbals is pretty much that of wood-tip sticks. If anything, each model might sound a little darker and heavier than its size would indicate. For those who want a brighter sound, each model is also available with a nylon tip.



Another advantage to making sticks out of plastic is that the material can be treated to achieve many different visual effects. As a result, EMMite sticks are available in EMMite Natural (translucent white), EMGlow (glow-in-the-dark), EMFlor (day-glow orange), and EMWood (wood-like opaque brown, with real wood fibers added to the plastic). The Naturals are priced at $19.95 per pair with natural tips, $20.95 with nylon tips. All the other models are $24.95 with natural tips and $25.95 with nylon tips. Each series is available in 7A, 5A, 5B, 2B, and 3S models. Timbale sticks have also been released.

EMMite sticks are just starting to get into the US market. If you can't find them at your dealer, contact EMMite at (519) 836-2542, or check out their Web site, www.emmitedrumsticks.com.

Rick Van Horn

SABOTAGE
RFORMANCE

the Virtues of Birch

kenny aronoff

Kenny Talks About His New Starclassic Performers.

Who's busier than Kenny Aronoff? When we finally caught up with him to get his thoughts about birch drums for this ad, he was at the airport on his "day off"—having just finished a gig on Letterman (and some clinics) and on his way to Denver to get back on the Joe Cocker tour. Busy, but as you know if you've ever met him, Kenny's never too busy to talk drums.

"Starclassic Maple changed everything. Sure, I played the old birch Tama Superstars. But Starclassic Maple is the best kit Tama's ever made. I love these kits. That's why I own six of them.

"But even with six kits, I couldn't get one in time for a couple San Francisco recording sessions. However, the studio did have a birch Starclassic Performer set. The tom sizes were a little different than what I normally use, an inch less deep. The kick was an 18 x 22 instead of my 16 x 24. Which was okay, I think the 18 x 22 size is one of the brilliant drum inventions of the past two decades.

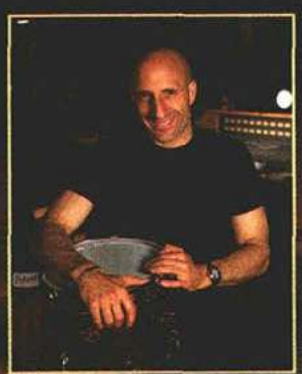
"I figured the kit would do all right, but I was immediately blown away by the Performers. They sounded phenomenal. They just jumped out at you. I felt like I was right there—the response was so quick...with a very centered tone and a lot of attack. But a lot of warmth, too. Anyway, they recorded superbly. That's the main thing.

"So I ordered a kit. I use the birch Performer for sessions where I want a more controlled sound and for stuff that's more expressive in the softer dynamics. Or when I want a tighter kick drum sound that's big and ballsy, but not boomy.

"It's not that maple is better than birch or birch is better than maple. They're just different in sound. They're also different in price—for almost half the price of a maple Starclassic, you can get a birch Starclassic Performer with the same quality—the same die-cast hoops and Star-Cast mounting system. And that's unbelievable."

"I use the birch Performer when I want a more controlled sound and for stuff that's more expressive in the softer dynamics. Or when I want a tighter kick drum sound that's big, but not boomy."

Hear Kenny Aronoff on Tony Iommi's new self-titled release on Priority Records.



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Tyler Stewart
Barenaked Drummer

If ever a band balanced shtick and art, it's Barenaked Ladies. They sing intricate parts, some at rocket speed. They dance with moves that range from raucous buffoonery to intricate, choreographed steps. They're a joyous blend of rock, pop, and vaudeville. And as for drummer Tyler Stewart, one moment he's rocking, the next he's motoring through bluegrass. He howls through "Be My Yoko Ono" and helps tug at the heartstrings in "What A Good Boy." And he does it all with a lot of flair.

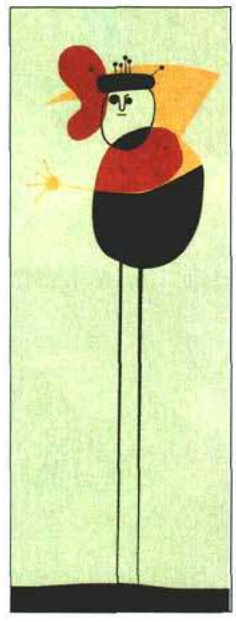
On the BNLs' latest album, *Maroon,* produced by Don Was, the band seems to have gotten the balance right. They've taken the pace down a merciful few clicks and they're stepping on each note a little harder. The formula seems to be working. You can barely turn on MTV or VH1 without seeing the Barenakeds serving burgers in "Pinch Me."

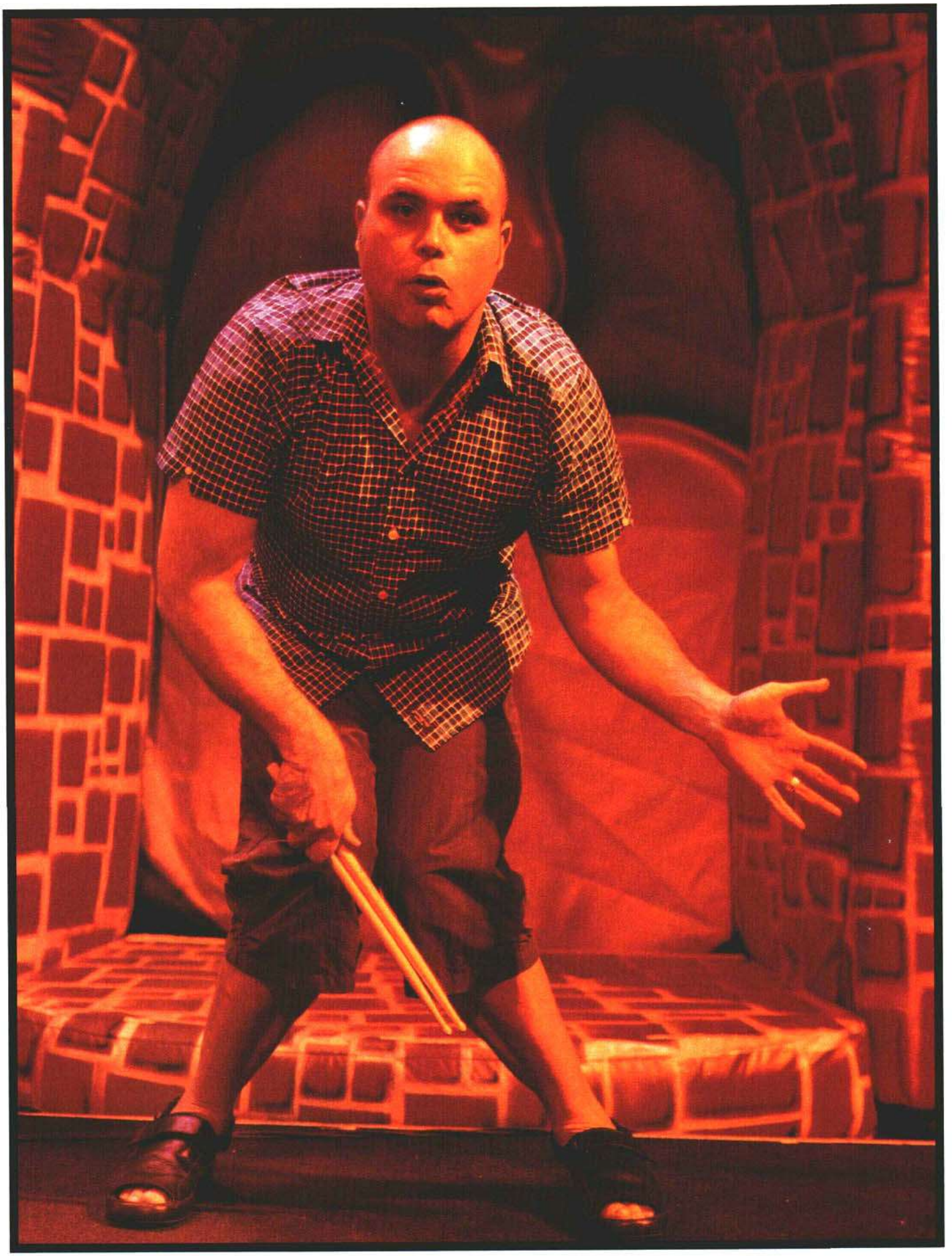
Pinch me, indeed. Not too long ago these guys busked for loose change on the streets of Toronto, Canada, playing ditties such as "If I Had $1,000,000." Now they *have* a million dollars.

Stewart walks a musical tightrope. To drive Barenaked Ladies, he must cut transitions between polkas, train beats, swing, Bonham-esque rock, and even techno. Good thing he has a Regal Tip endorsement, because he goes through a lot of brushes. And when he takes up sticks, he hits with authority. Even in the band's early days, Stewart had an instantly recognizable clanky snare backbeat. Another trait is a heavy right foot. And, although he denies it, Tyler has something special to bring to Latin.

No question, Tyler Stewart has emerged as one of the most exciting pop drummers to come along in years.

Story by T. Bruce Wittet
Photos by Alex Solca



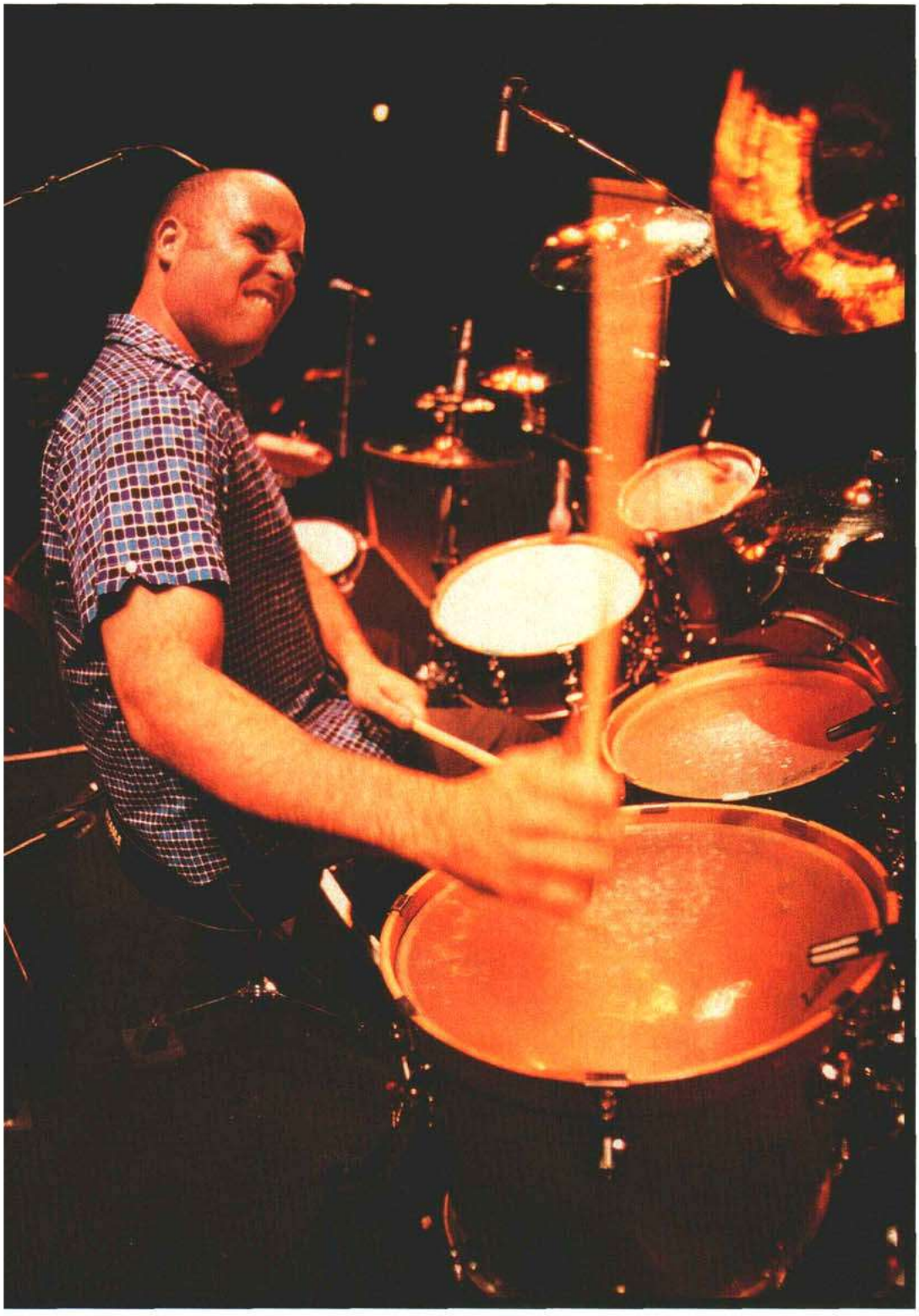


MD: Are you a drum geek?

Tyler: My friend Steve and I were notorious around public school for bringing our drumsticks everywhere we went, practicing double-stroke rolls and stuff. We both joined a drum & bugle corps at the same time—The Ambassadors Drum & Bugle Corps in Newmarket.

We learned all the paradiddle/double-stroke roll/flamadiddle kind of stuff. It was a great way to build chops. Steve and I would put a pillow on our laps while we watched TV and practice away. We were definitely geeks.

In high school, the band director was like, "Wow, this kid can play," and he immediately put me into the senior band and the stage band. I was always playing drums throughout high school.



MD: Maybe you're not a drum geek now, but I'm thinking the look and balance of your red sparkle Ayotte kit is important to you.

Tyler: Totally. It's funny you would notice that because when I was a kid practicing in the basement on my starter Pearl kit, I used to experiment with positioning of toms and stuff—even take pictures of it to make sure everything looked right. When you're young, the aesthetic thing is more important to you. Now I set up for ease of play.

If you look at my cymbals, I have two levels. On the first level I have a hi-hat and splash, which is to my left, and on the right side there's a splash and a ride. There's also a tambourine on the hi-hat. For the next level up, there are two crashes and a China. It just makes sense from a mechanical point of view.

MD: Early on you did a lot of busking [street playing] with the BNLs. Do you still play your cocktail kit?

Tyler : Oh yeah. Barenaked Ladies has always been an acoustic band. So things like the cocktail kit—which takes two seconds to set up, is portable, and gives a good bass and snare action—makes a lot of sense, especially for radio shows and in-store acoustic sets.

MD: And this would stem naturally from busking.

Tyler: Yes. I actually met the guys at a busking festival in

"I've been guilty of getting a perfect performance in terms of the drum part, but not providing the right vibe and energy, A song has to have spontaneity, joy, and spirit more than anything else."

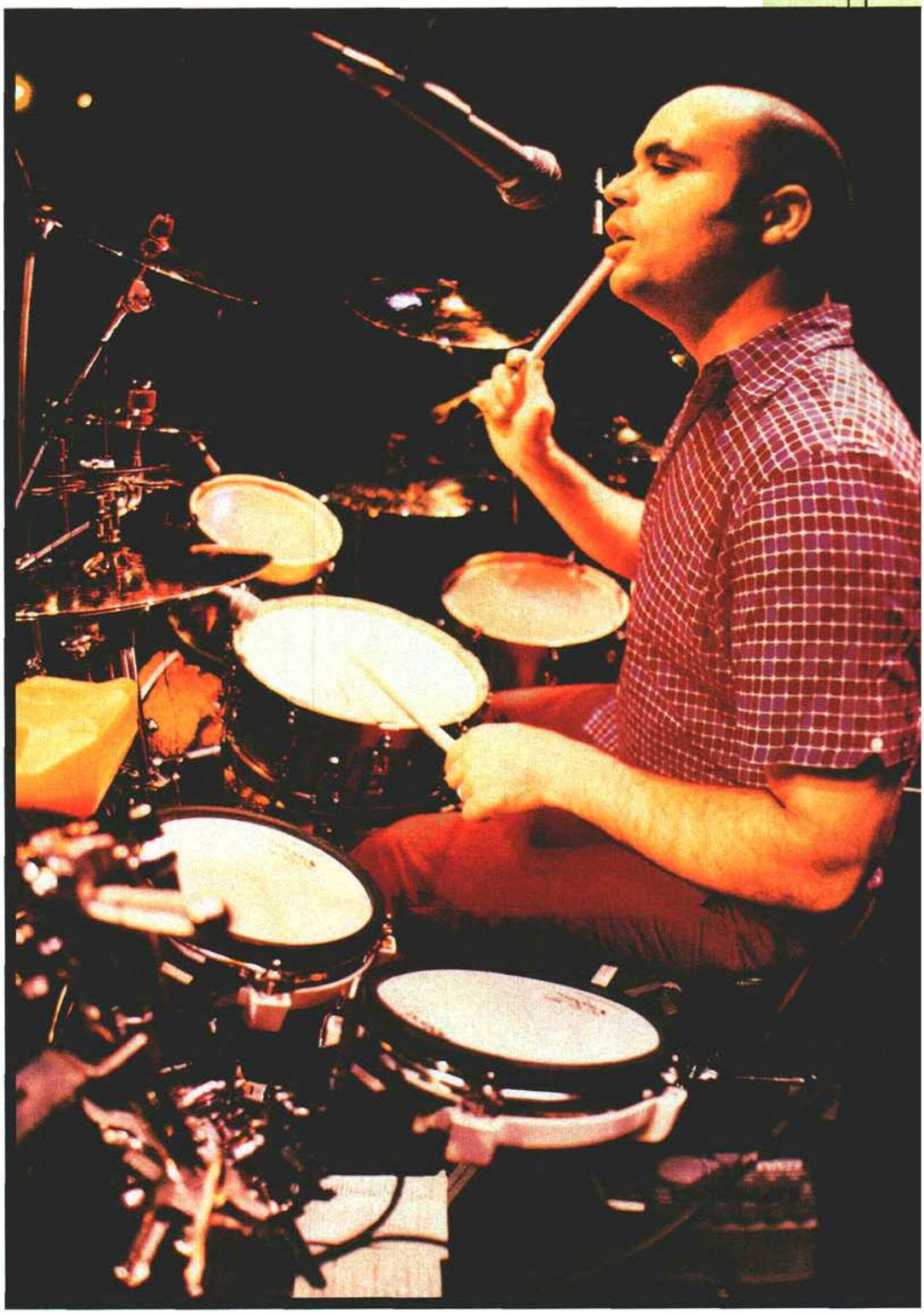
Waterloo, Ontario. I was playing a suitcase with brushes with an accordion player and a guitar player. The Barenaked Ladies were there too, and I ended up sitting in with them a couple of times. It just so happened that my shuffled, train-type feel with brushes and suitcase worked well with their songs. The next thing you know, I had muscled my way into the band.

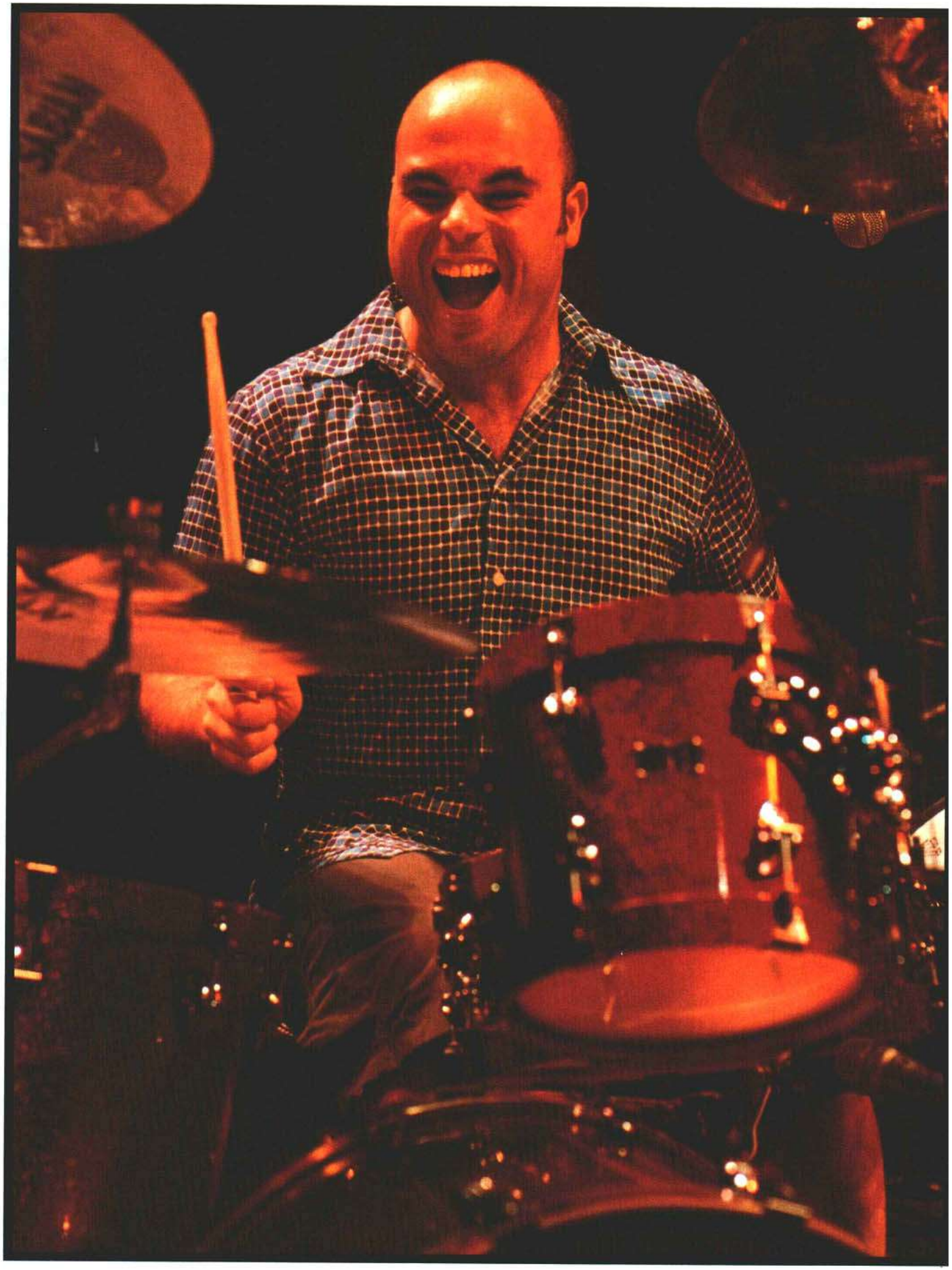
MD: Looking back at the Toronto scene, you didn't exactly follow the dressed-in-black artist stereotype so prevalent.

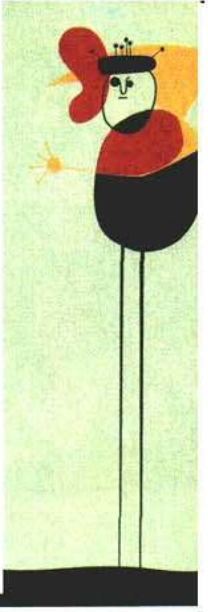
Tyler: No, we were the exact opposite of cool. We were geeks from Scarborough, and that's the way we sold ourselves. I wasn't living at home anymore—I was in Toronto working in the film business—but the other guys lived at their parents' houses. We'd go down to Queen Street and play these hip clubs, and we started to attract a following. I think some of the other bands wondered what the hell we were all about. But we just started to *entertain* people right away. We had a busker's ethic in that we would sometimes go out into the street and play to entice people in. Our shows were free-flowing, with lots of banter and made-up songs, much like now.

MD: You upset a lot of people with your name.

Tyler: When the mayor stopped us from playing City Hall at a city-sponsored event, we said fine and took another gig. Four days later the story







"We were geeks and that's the way we sold ourselves. But we started to *entertain* people right away."

was on the cover of the *Toronto Star* and my phone was ringing off the hook. I turned on the radio and Jim [Creeggan] was being interviewed—everything exploded. Our angle was that political correctness had gone too far. The Barenaked Ladies are a bunch of harmless guys who sing songs about having a million dollars and [telling a girl] you can be my Yoko Ono. Overnight we were thrown into a national debate. It was weird for us because we *stood* for some of the same stuff—for being kind to people and not using stereotypes. Overnight we went from being a Toronto club band to a national household name.

MD: So what's in a name?

Tyler: It's just something we used to say when we were kids. We'd open up the Sears catalog to the bra section and say, Wow, bare-naked ladies! It's from the land of kids.

MD: You don't have many songwriting credits in your band. But an early song, "Grade Nine," lists you as a writer.

Tyler: I'm comfortable with being the drummer in the band. In "Grade Nine," we had a group brainstorm. We were writing about our experiences, right down to ripping off the Rush licks and playing the "Peanuts" theme. For the snare sound on that album, *Gordon,* I have to credit Michael Phillip Wojewoda, the producer. He would mike the snare and send it through a guitar amp, really crank up the high end and put some distortion on it, and then send it back through the board. When I listen back to *Gordon* now, almost ten years later, I can't believe the barking hoot of that snare!

MD: You were hitting a rimshot, right?

Tyler: Yes, or at least I think I ended up doing that. Those were the early, terrifying days in the studio—the old slave-to-the-click-track thing. I was probably so rigid I was hitting rimshots every time *unintentionally.* That was one of my first experiences in the studio. It's taken me ten years but now I'm totally comfortable with the click track.

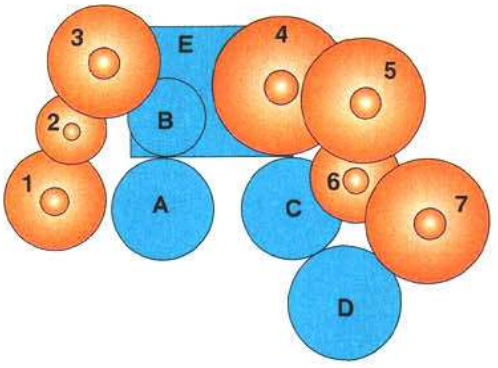
MD: Was there some revelation?

Tyler: No, just the passage of time. And it took the whole band embracing the fact that we *all* had time issues. Eventually I found the click liberating because I didn't have to assume as much responsibility for the time. Now, having said that, I don't think perfect time is what makes an amazing pop song.

MD: When I think of Barenaked Ladies, I think of fast tempos.

Tyler: Yeah, we used to play such fast songs! For me, it was the

Naked Drums



Drums: Ayotte WoodHoop in red sparkle finish
A. 5x14 20-ply snare (or 28-ply snare or 13" piccolo)
B. 10x10 tom
C. 14x14 tom
D. 16x16 tom
E. 20x22 bass drum

Cymbals: Sabian
1. 14" HH Dark hi-hats
2. 8" HH splash
3. 16" HH thin crash
4. 20" Steve White Signature ride
5. 18" HH Dark crash
6. 13" El Sabor
7. 18" Chinese

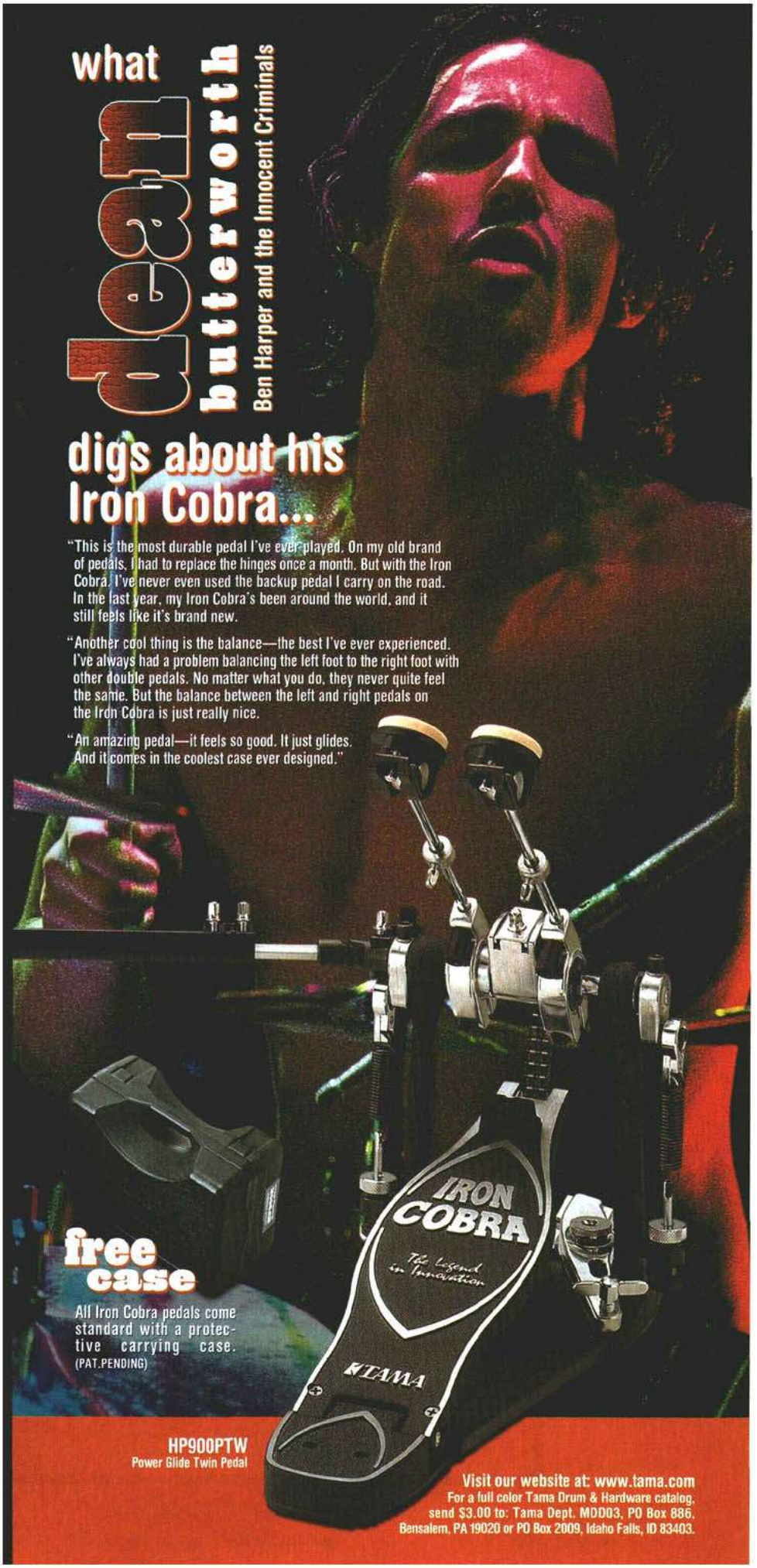
Hardware: Tama stands and pedals

Heads: Aquarian Response Two coated on snare and toms, Response Two clear on bass drum

Sticks: Regal Tip Groovers, Blastix, brushes

Electronics: Roland PD80 pads (2), Roland TD7 brain, Yamaha A5000 sampler, Tama Rhythm Watch, Roland V-Drums for practice in dressing room.

Drum Tech: Robert "Tiny" Menegoni



Tyler Stewart

energy of the live performances. In Canada in 1992, we played four nights at Massey Hall and it was a scream fest. The teenage girls were going crazy and we couldn't hear ourselves on stage. The monitors were cranked up so loud I'm pretty sure I shaved off some high end from my hearing. I was carried away by the excitement, and I think some of the tempos suffered because of that.

MD: On the other end of the spectrum, on a song like "Break Your Heart" you seem to have no trouble with the slow tempo.

Tyler: I got better at that over the years. We did so much brushes-on-snare-type stuff coming from that country & western/folk ethic—bright songs that skipped along like bluegrass. But we also had ballads. I guess the beauty of our concerts was that we took you from hysteria to somberness.

I don't think I ever approached a song thinking it needed a big flam tom fill or something. I was always playing the song. *That* was my transition from drum geek into bandmember.

MD: I did a double take when I saw you credit Rush on an early album.

Tyler: Neil was a huge influence. The three big influences on my playing are Neil, Stewart Copeland, and John Bonham. As a suburban kid, you couldn't *help* but be into Rush; as a drummer, he was the guy. It was a rite of passage for teenagers to play Rush songs badly at high school talent shows.

MD: What struck you about Stewart Copeland?

Tyler: His energy, which was astounding, and the reggae influence in his playing. It took me the longest time to figure out the 1 and the 3. You grow up in a 2-and-4 culture. The change for me was like, Oh wow, I can put the snare drum on 1 and 3 instead of the bass drum—cool!

MD: I notice a Latin influence in your playing.

Tyler: I like Latin music a lot. I think in Barenaked Ladies that love came from Andrew Creeggan, who left the band. He played congas, shakers, and also *montuno-type* piano. On songs like "Box Set," I'd have to say I'm playing catch-up. I was aware of Latin players like Alex Acuna, but I really didn't know anything about it. My lack of skill in Latin music, mixed with my enthusiasm, created a hybrid drumming style.

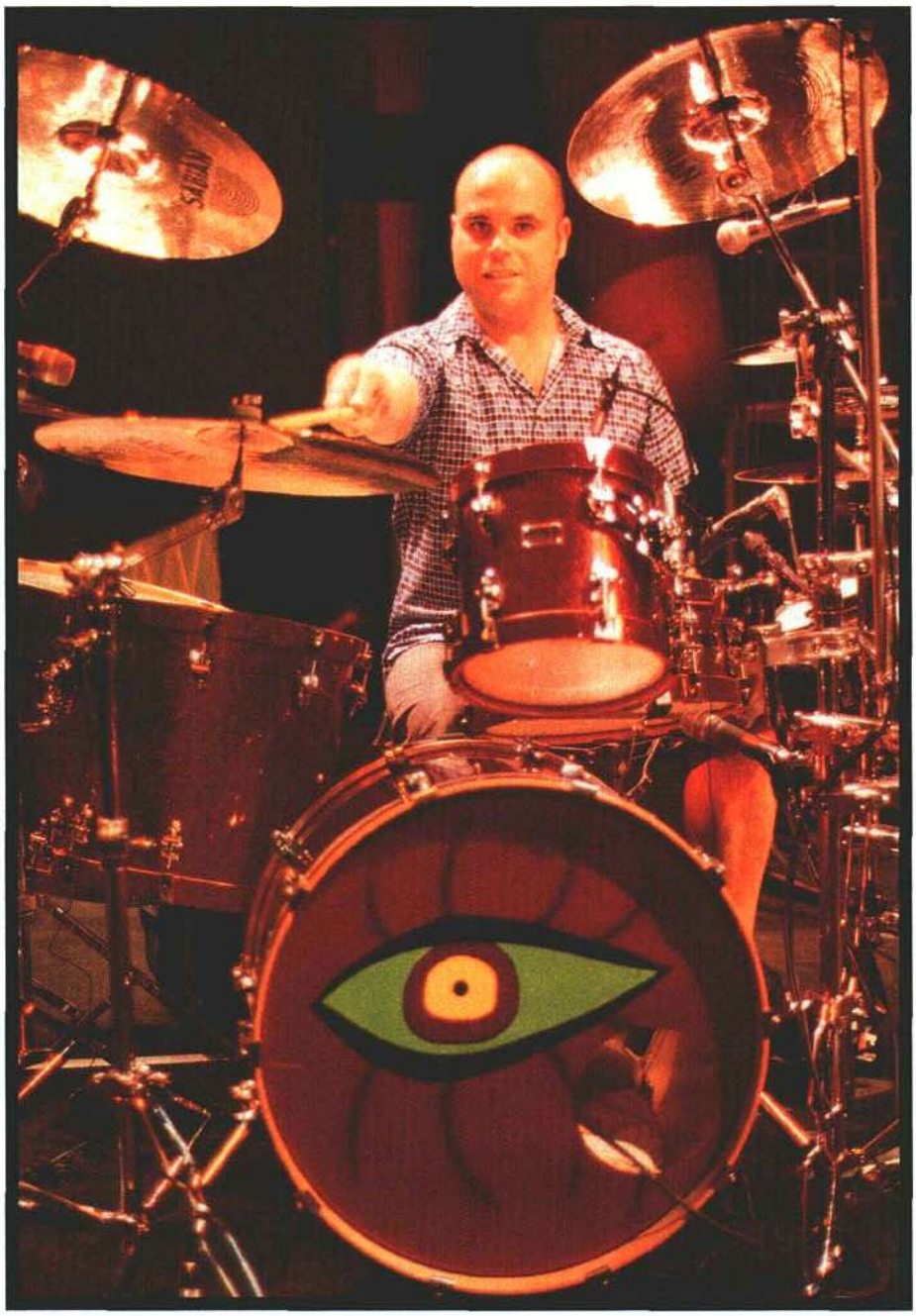
MD: Are you the type who would stop at the music store and pick up a book like *Afro-Cuban Rhythms For Bass and Drums!*

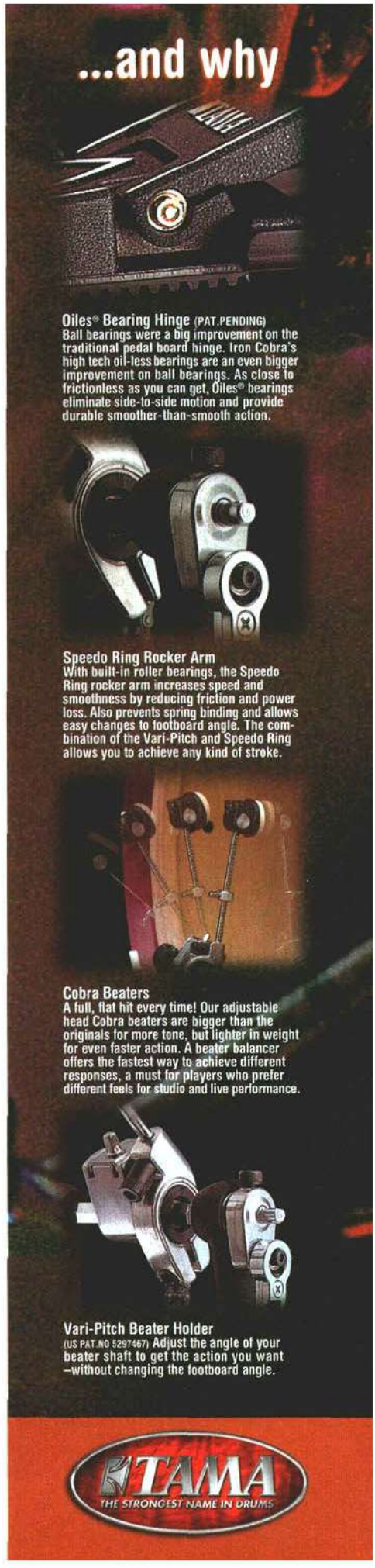
Tyler: No, I'm not that guy. I don't really practice very much any more, mainly due to the fact that we perform so often. We've been on tour for ten years straight. I like to do other things when I'm not playing in a band. I'm married, I have a daughter, and I've really gotten into cooking. When the group gets together to rehearse a new album or a new tour, *that's* when I get right down to it.

My first drum teacher, a guy named Larry Mansbridge, who now works for Yamaha, told me I was a good drummer but not a very good drum student. I never practiced; I just liked to play the drums. For me, it was like if I hit these things, people will react, people will start dancing—or run from the room screaming! God gave me some sort of gift—or somebody did.

MD: Referring to your famous song, have you ever met Yoko Ono?

Tyler: Never met her, but we met Sean a couple of times. We have Yoko on tape in 1991 saying she listened to the song and thought it was kind of funny. We wrote a





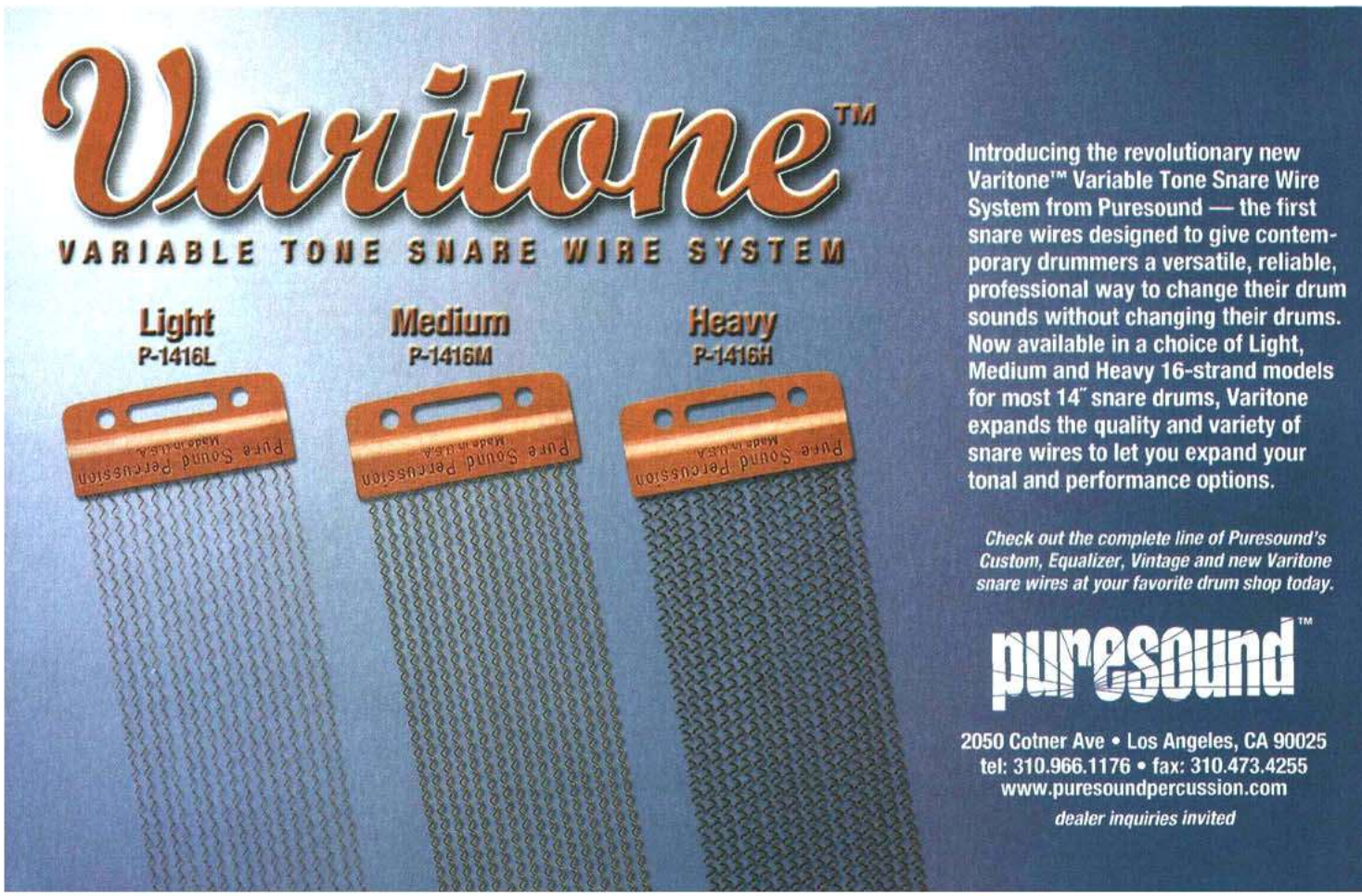
Tyler Tunes

These are the records that Stewart says best represent his playing:

Artist	Album
Barenaked Ladies	Gordon
	Born On A Pirate Ship
	Rock Spectacle
	Stunt
	Maroon

...and these are the ones he listens to for inspiration:

Artist	Album	Drummer
James Brown	Big Payback	Clyde Stubblefield, Jabo Starks
Elvis Costello & The Attractions	Best Of	Pete Thomas
Elvis Costello & The Attractions	Brutal Youth	Pete Thomas
The Police	all	Stewart Copeland
Sting	Bring On The Night	Omar Hakim
Rheostatics	Whale Music	Dave Clarke
Led Zeppelin	Led Zeppelin II	John Bonham
Led Zeppelin	Led Zeppelin III	John Bonham
Led Zeppelin	Houses Of The Holy	John Bonham
Nirvana	Nevermind	Dave Grohl
The Flaming Lips	The Soft Bulletin	Steven Drozd
A Tribe Called Quest	The Low End Theory	drum beats and programming by Ali Shaheed Mohammed
Violent Femmes	Violent Femmes	Victor DeLorenzo
Prefab Sprout	Steve McQueen	Neil Conti



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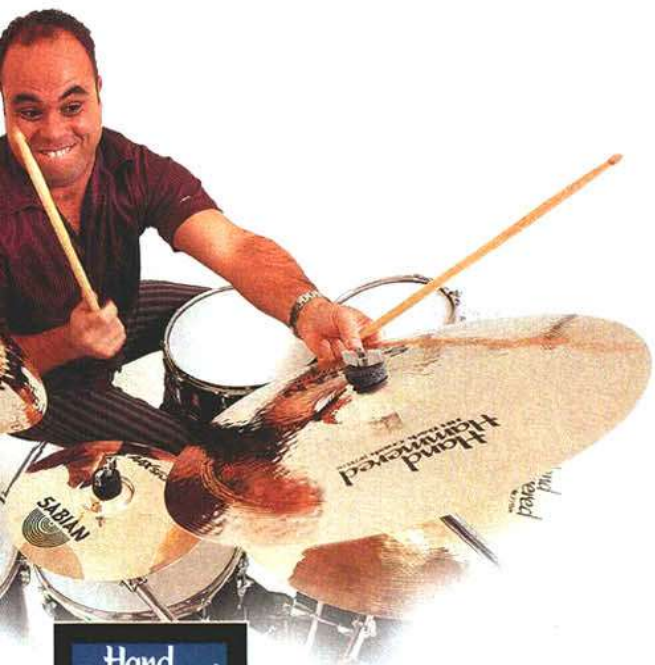

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lot about pop-culture figures. That's your world when you're a twenty-year old. Even on our last album, we were dropping references to the *X Files* and Sting.

MD: I've always been able to spot your sound on records. Tell me about it.

Tyler: I remember reading *MD* and people would write in to Bill Bruford asking about that snare sound. He would graciously tell them that you have to tune your drum well, and that it helps to have a nice snare drum and all that.

The engineer is very important, and so is mic' placement. I remember being astounded by one of those floppy vinyl discs in an old *Modern Drummer*. It was with Andy Newmark—a studio-miking thing. Aside from drum talk, drum sounds are as much studio talk and engineer talk.

Susan Rogers, who engineered *Stunt,* did a lot of room miking. She was really into drum sounds, and while she close-miked them, she also used these ambient room mic's set up high in front of the kit, ten feet back.

So technique definitely makes the drums sound better, combined with the right mic' placement. Muffling the hell out of drums and close-miking isn't necessarily the answer. Moreso, it's listening to the character of a kit in the room, then trying to place a mic' to capture that excitement.

MD: It was reported that while you were recording *Maroon,* Brian Wilson dropped in.

Tyler: I didn't know what to do! Don Was, who was producing our album, had worked with him on a film. We heard through the grapevine that Brian had covered our song "Brian Wilson."

So he dropped by with his wife to play us his version of the song. He played the track, and it was beautiful—just him singing about himself. We were floored. As the last notes were fading, he looked up and said, "Cool, fellows." Yeah, man, it *sure was* cool! Then he had some advice as he left: "Don't eat too much, fellows."

MD: You use a lot of brush sounds on *Maroon*—and in general.

Tyler: I came to them because I had to play quietly. I've watched great brush players like Jeff Hamilton. When he plays it's as if he's pouring sand from a pail—it's just beautiful. Clayton Cameron is another major brush guy. I'm not in their league, but I love to play them.

I moved up from wire brushes to these things called J-Men, which are made in Canada, and also to Calato Blastix. What I'm finding with both of those is that they just sound so damn *good* on a drum. The attack doesn't overwhelm the decay. You get the full tone of the drum. I was talking to Jim Scott about this—he engineered *Maroon*—and he said they sounded so nice, I decided to use them all over the album.

MD: Tell me about your song "Alcohol."

Tyler: Susan Rogers commented that I played very orchestrally on that song. The main thing I was trying to do was to make this driving song continue to flow, despite shifting rhythms. There's one fill that I love in there. It's one of those happy click track accidents. My tendency—and I think a lot of drummers do this—is to rush fills. There's one in the middle by the lyric,

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"Was just for those with nothing left to lose." I played this [sings loose, deep-sounding fill], and you can hear me slowing down because I'm hearing the click and realizing that I rushed the first half of the fill. Jim Creeggan loved the way it sounded because it has a drunken feel.

MD: What was Don Was' *modus operandi?*

Tyler: It was to capture the band the way we sound live. We went for takes. Don was in the room with us with headphones on—he wasn't in the control room. It was a big room at Cello Studios, which is where Frank Sinatra and The Mamas & The Papas recorded. Jim Scott, our engineer, decked the whole place out in funky fabric and had Christmas lights and incense going. He facilitated this great atmosphere and we just *rocked.*

We set the drums up on one side and put some sound baffling around them down low so you could still see my face and I could see the other guys. We isolated Jimmy in a booth with the bass, and the vocalist was usually in a booth right in front of me. Ed and Kevin were both on the studio floor playing live. We even went for live vocals. The energy level was ten times higher than what it usually is in the studio. We were all so comfortable and excited.

You can really hear the fun I was having in my playing. I should mention that a lot of it has to do with the fact that over the winter I lost twenty pounds and started exercising. And I started eating more responsibly. I think my playing improved because I was in much better shape.

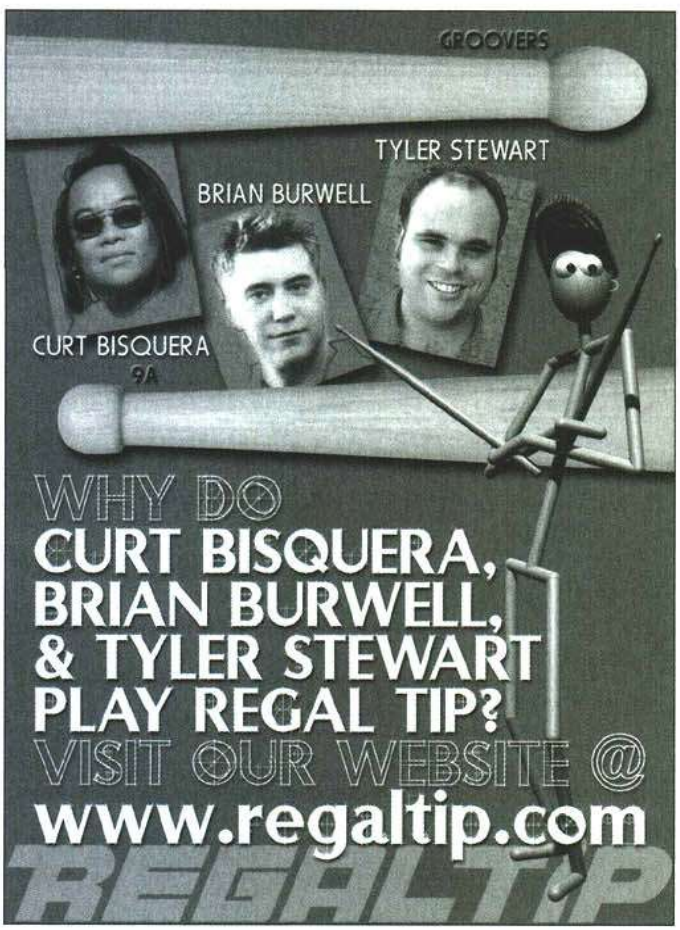
MD: That's a hard thing: to diet while you're on the road.

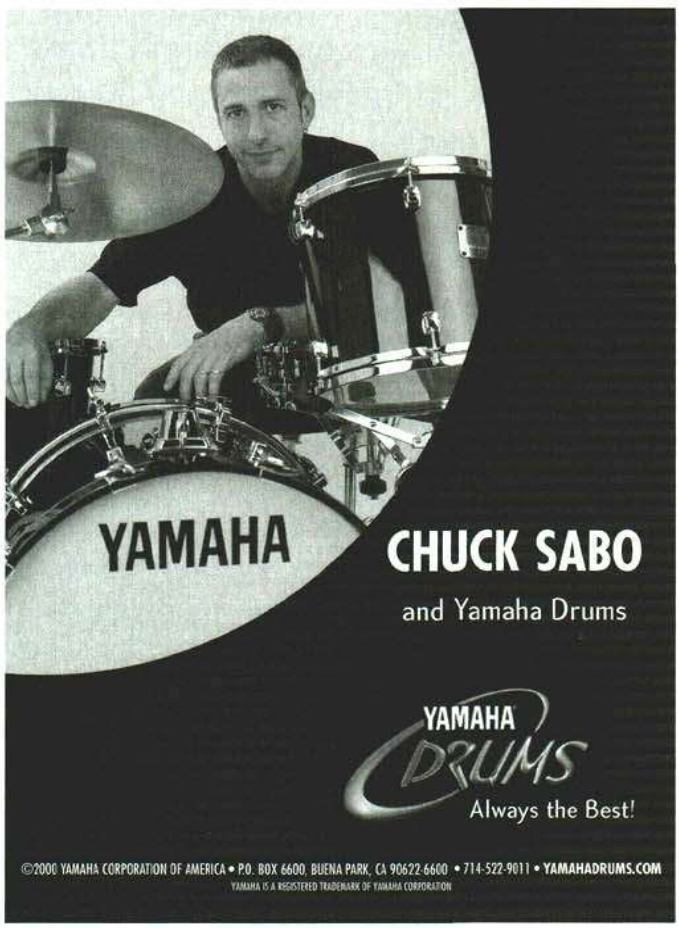
Tyler: The fatigue builds when constantly traveling by bus or plane, and lethargy sets in. You overeat because you're bored. If you take a look at *Barenaked In America,* the film that Jason Priestly did about us, you'll see a much heavier Tyler. You can hear me start to slow down a little at the end of "Brian Wilson." You can hear the fatigue in the playing. When I saw that, I knew I had to do something about it.

MD: We've got to talk about the drum sound on your hit "Pinch Me," especially the weird, affected drums on the intro.

Tyler: Jim Scott got these crappy drums and all kinds of crappy instruments, stuff he's picked up at swap meets. I was playing this old drumkit he brought that had acid on the front head of the bass drum. He's got a collection of snares and hi-hats. We set this stuff up on the floor and put room mic's on them. On "Pinch Me," I played the track and we looped the two best bars and approached the song with that loop as the foundation. We're all fans of hip-hop music, and the idea of loops is cool. It's actually me playing a crappy kit in a big room, doing little licks over the loop, like I was playing "rhythm drumkit," as opposed to "lead drumkit."

Sometimes I'll try to play like a machine or like a hip-hop drum track. Some of the R&B guys do it amazingly well. Then there are the drum 'n' bass drummers, who are emulating those fast techno beats. There's Clive Demer from the UK, who





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Tyler Stewart
Barenaked Ladies

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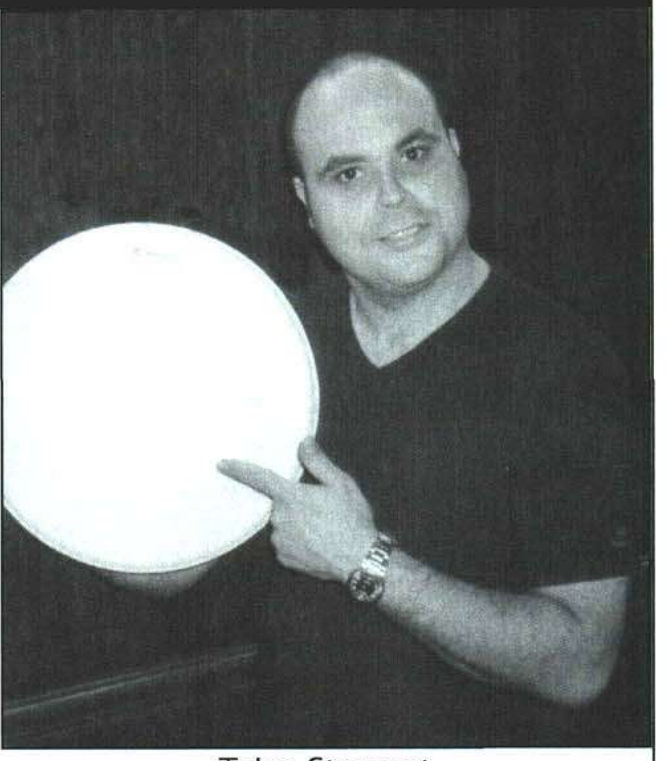

Tyler Stewart

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plays with Ronnie Size and Portishead. He sounds like a "modern looped drummer"—there's a good title for an article!

MD: I love the splashy hi-hat sound and also the snare sound on "Conventioneers."

Tyler: That's an old 13" hi-hat, another set that Jim Scott had. The snare is a Ludwig Super Sensitive, but tuned *way* down and miked closely. Jim put the mic' on the hi-hat post *underneath* the snare. It picks up the hats and also the brush sound on the snare.

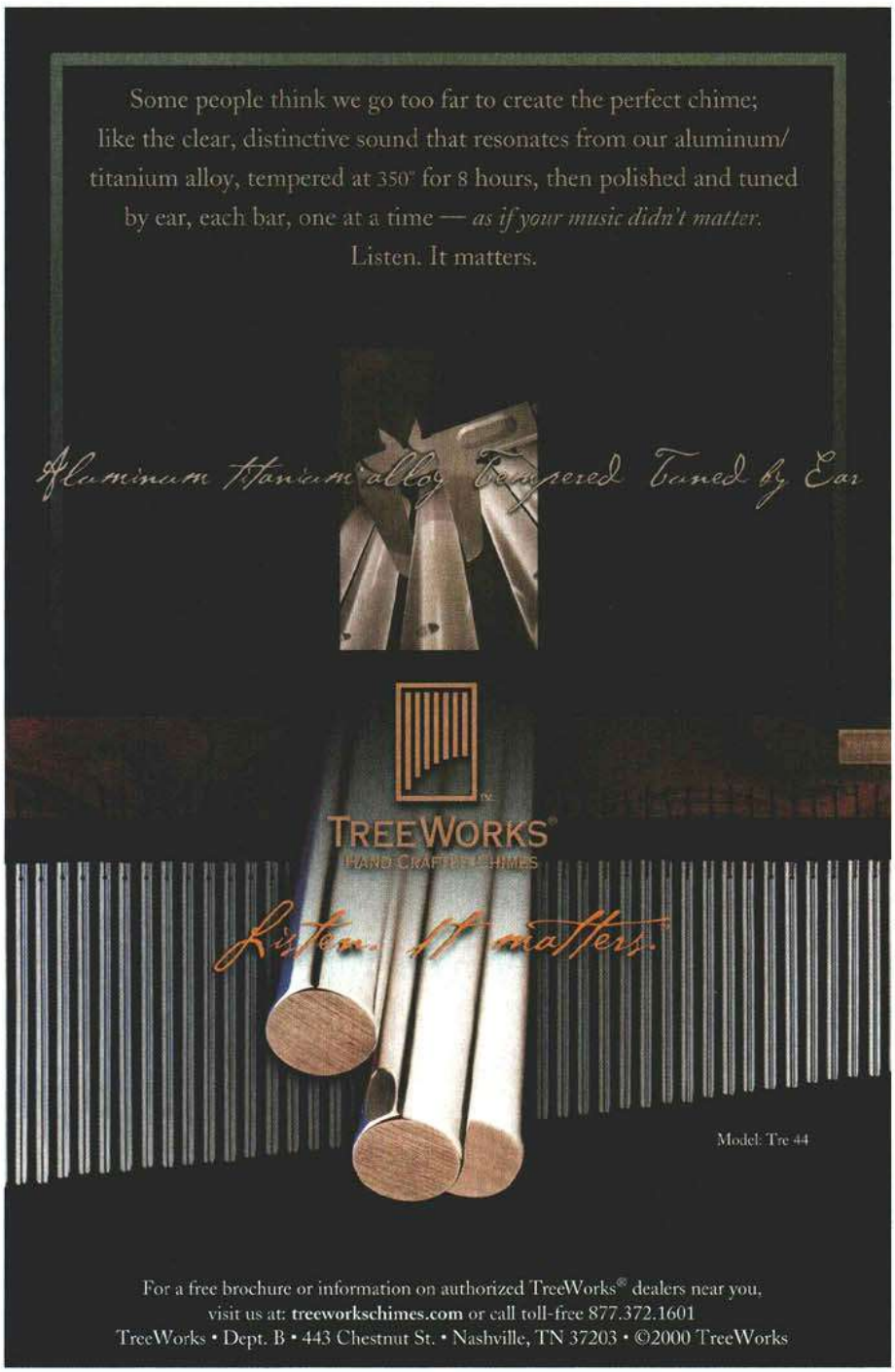
MD: What about "Baby Seat"?

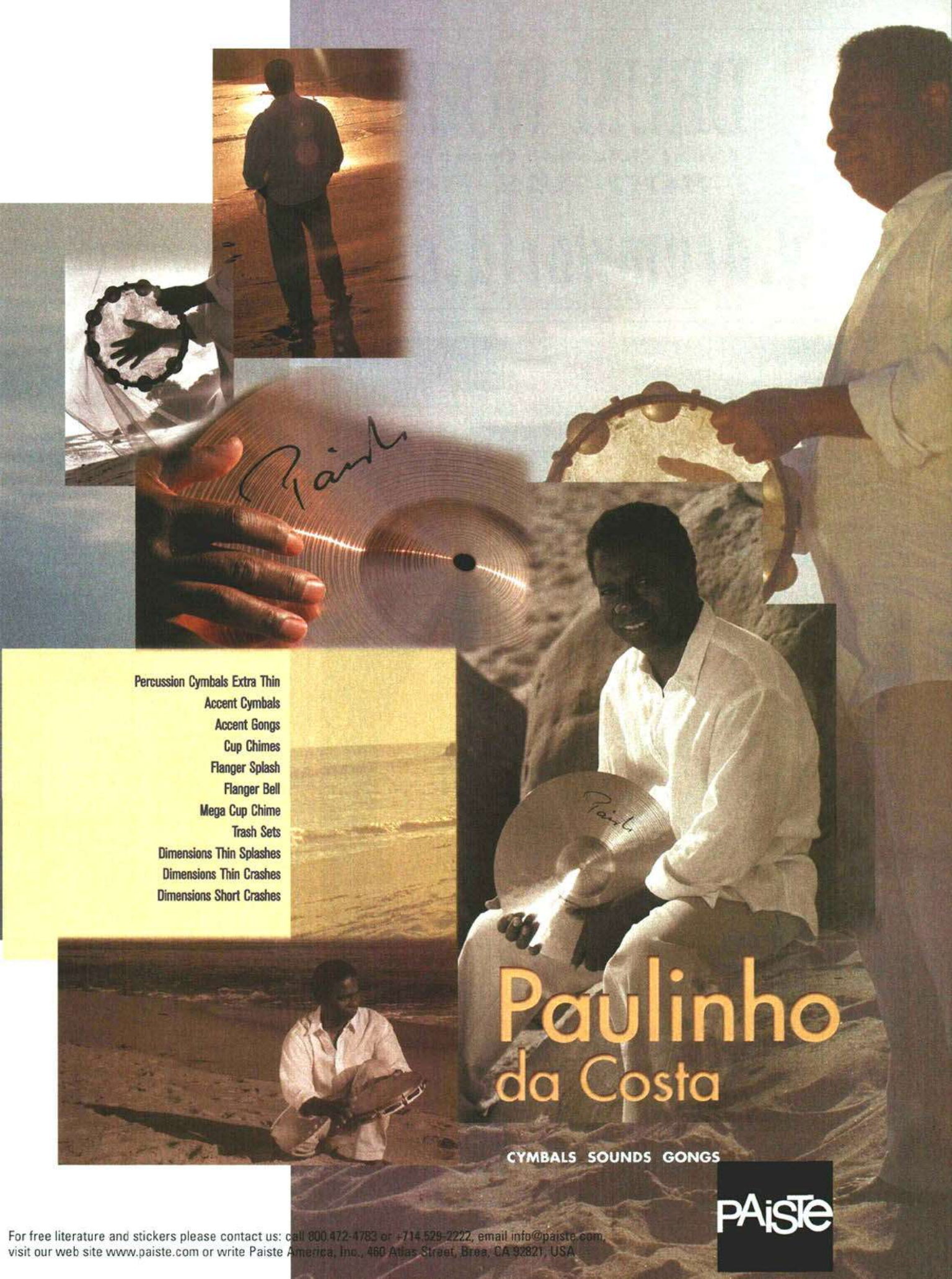
Tyler: Don Was literally put on an old Al Green record for us, and we tried to get that sound. Jim Scott put me in the vocal booth with Jim Creeggan on bass, while the other guys were in the big room. We detuned an old Ludwig wooden snare and used one of my Ayotte bass drums. He took everything out of the bass drum. I brought in an old tom as well, tuned down, and we used those old 13" hi-hats again. We had one room mic', and I think he miked the kick.

MD: What's that galloping sound? Is that just EQ on the hi-hats?

Tyler: Jim has a separate track on the board that he calls "drum crush," which he uses to get that kind of flattened out, overdriven sound. Ordinarily, the levels would peak the hell out of the meter, but because it's being compressed, it's tamed. He sends the whole drum mix through a compressor, then brings it up on this track on the board so he can mix in varying degrees of this sound.

There's a tune called "Helicopters," where I had the idea to try to make an exciting drum track. I heard the Chemical Brothers song that Noel Gallager sang on. The song is like The Beatles' "Tomorrow Never Knows," and the drum part is like Ringo's part. I was emulating that. My drum tech, Tiny, had a little 8" snare made by Joe Montineri that I set up to the left. I split up the Ringo sound between my main

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snare and that little snare. It was a great beat but it was missing something. We realized the 4 wasn't being properly represented in the beat, so we overdubbed it on an old Tama tom, literally while the record was being mixed. This low beat on 4 really makes the song happen.

MD: You ride on a floor tom on "Jane," which adds a different texture to the song.

Tyler: Yes, I'm riding it on the bridge. What a headache that song was! We made that record with Ben Mink, who produced k.d. lang's records. I think I did the drum track seventy times. These days, if we don't get it in five or six takes, then we scrap the song and come back and do it again some other time. The energy level goes right out and you start overanalyzing. I've been guilty of getting a perfect performance in terms of the drum part, but not providing the right vibe and energy. A song has to have spontaneity, joy, and spirit more than anything else.

On "Too Little Too Late," for instance, the song speeds up like crazy. While playing to a click, we were finding that the natural inclination of the whole group in the second half was to launch the thing into the stratosphere. So Don Was just turned the click off and told us to do our thing. The result is this exciting track.

I think young drummers shouldn't be too hard on themselves about time. Time is something to be learned; you'll know good feel when you achieve it. You'll listen back to some of your older recordings and be appalled, like I was at the shifts in tempo. But it doesn't make or break a song—as long as you're grooving and you're in sync with the band.

I think about Tony Williams when he was seventeen years old, playing with Miles Davis. The guy was a burning firestorm on drums, and he sped the hell out of stuff. But who cares? It was incredibly moving and soulful music.

Another song I wanted to talk about was "One Week." That song is a good example of learning in the studio. Originally Ed came with a demo with this crazy hip-hop rhythm. I started emulating that and it wasn't grooving, so I simplified the drum part. The cross-stick on the beat and the verses and the choruses crashing on the hi-hat gave it a heavy funk beat.

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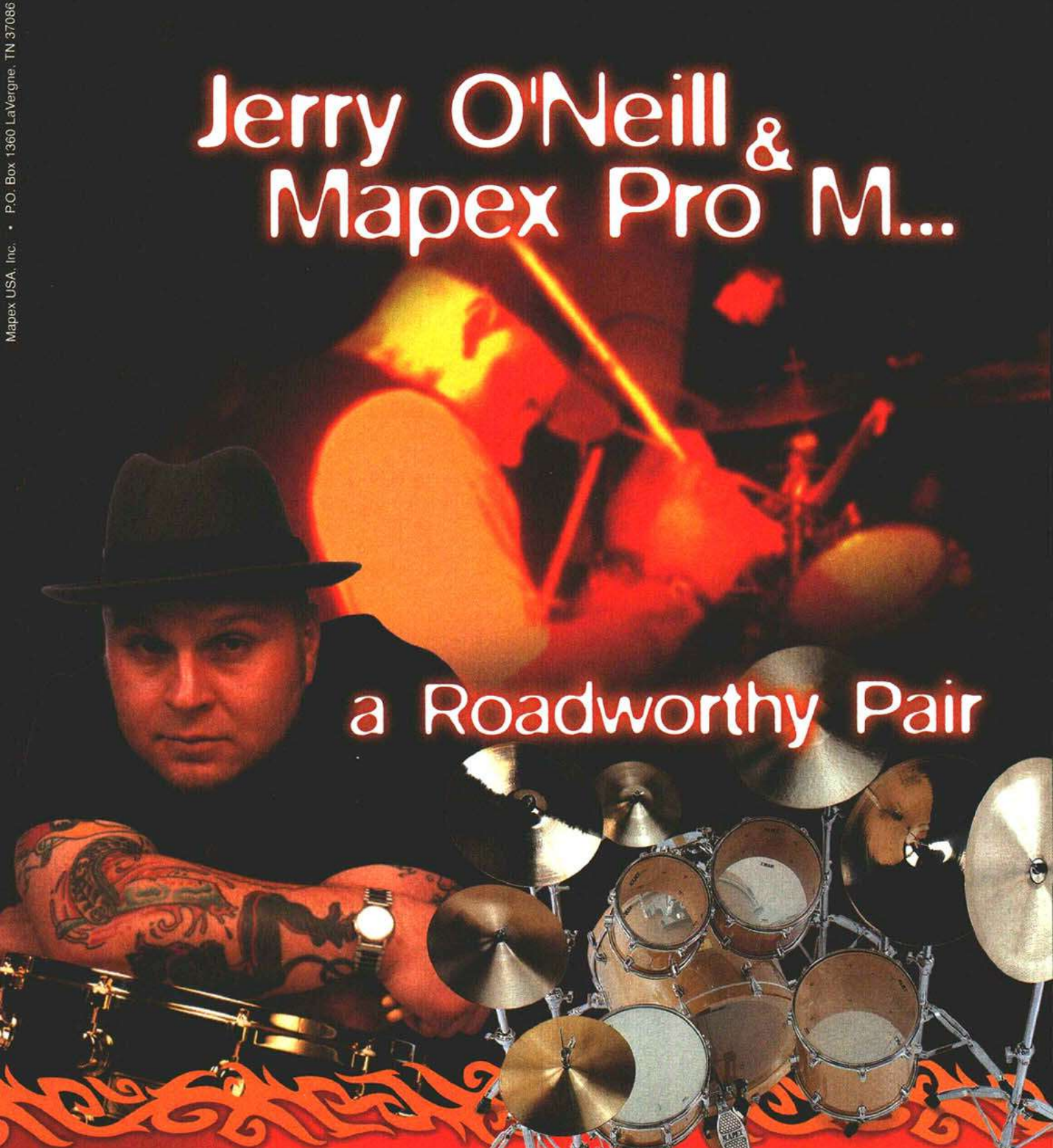
Jerry O'Neill & Mapex Pro M...



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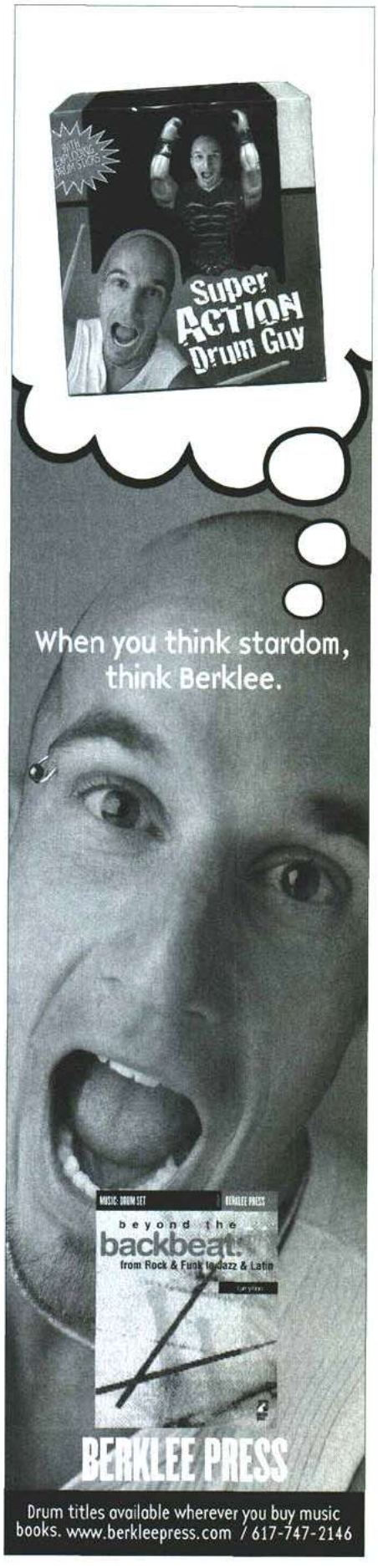

Tyler Stewart

MD: You've got that ride cymbal tightened down so it barely moves. Why?
Tyler: So it doesn't move too much and hit the microphone. I use the ride a lot, and I like to close-mike it. Also, it's clamped down because I've been crashing a lot more on the ride—probably not the best thing for tendinitis!
MD: What were you looking for when you chose that particular ride?
Tyler: I love ride cymbals. When I had my first set of decent cymbals back in 1982, I had a Zildjian Ping ride. I loved that cymbal. I've always liked a bit of ring and lots of definition. Over the years I've gone in the opposite direction, towards the more Jack DeJohnette [Sabian] concept of a cymbal, where you get lots of spread and definition as well. It's not an overwhelming ping. Sabian's Steve White Signature ride is amazing because it's the best of both worlds: I can crash *and* ride on it.
MD: The band's song "If I Had $1,000,000" must seem odd to you all, now that the band is so successful. What kinds of things are you buying today, now that you're making some money?
Tyler: We all have nice houses. You need to make a home base, because life on the road is so crazy and sporadic. You need to have a place that represents you and your wife and kids. I spend my money on nice kitchen stuff—good knives, stoves, and mixers. I spend my money on making my home a nice place to be. We all live in Canada still. We love taxes, so we're staying in Canada. [laughs]

We're happy that all these avenues have opened up for us. We can be on David Letterman or Jay Leno, and our album gets reviewed in *Rolling Stone*. There were times we faced incredible adversities, for instance when Kevin [Hearn] went down with leukemia. But it makes you stronger. It really brought the band together, and we're at a peak now. I think it really shows on *Maroon*. We're comfortable with each other.

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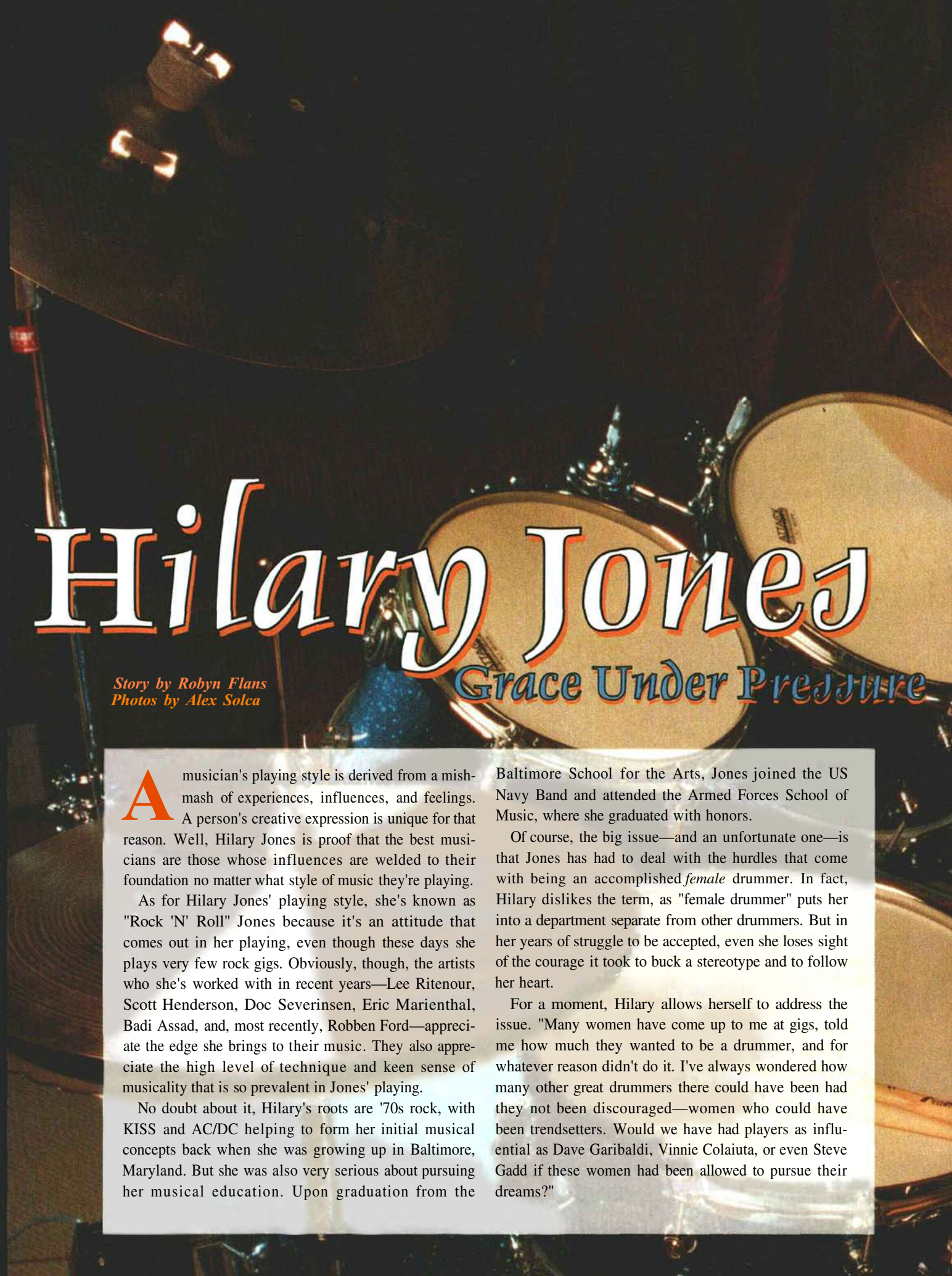


Hilary Jones

Grace Under Pressure

Story by Robyn Flans
Photos by Alex Solca

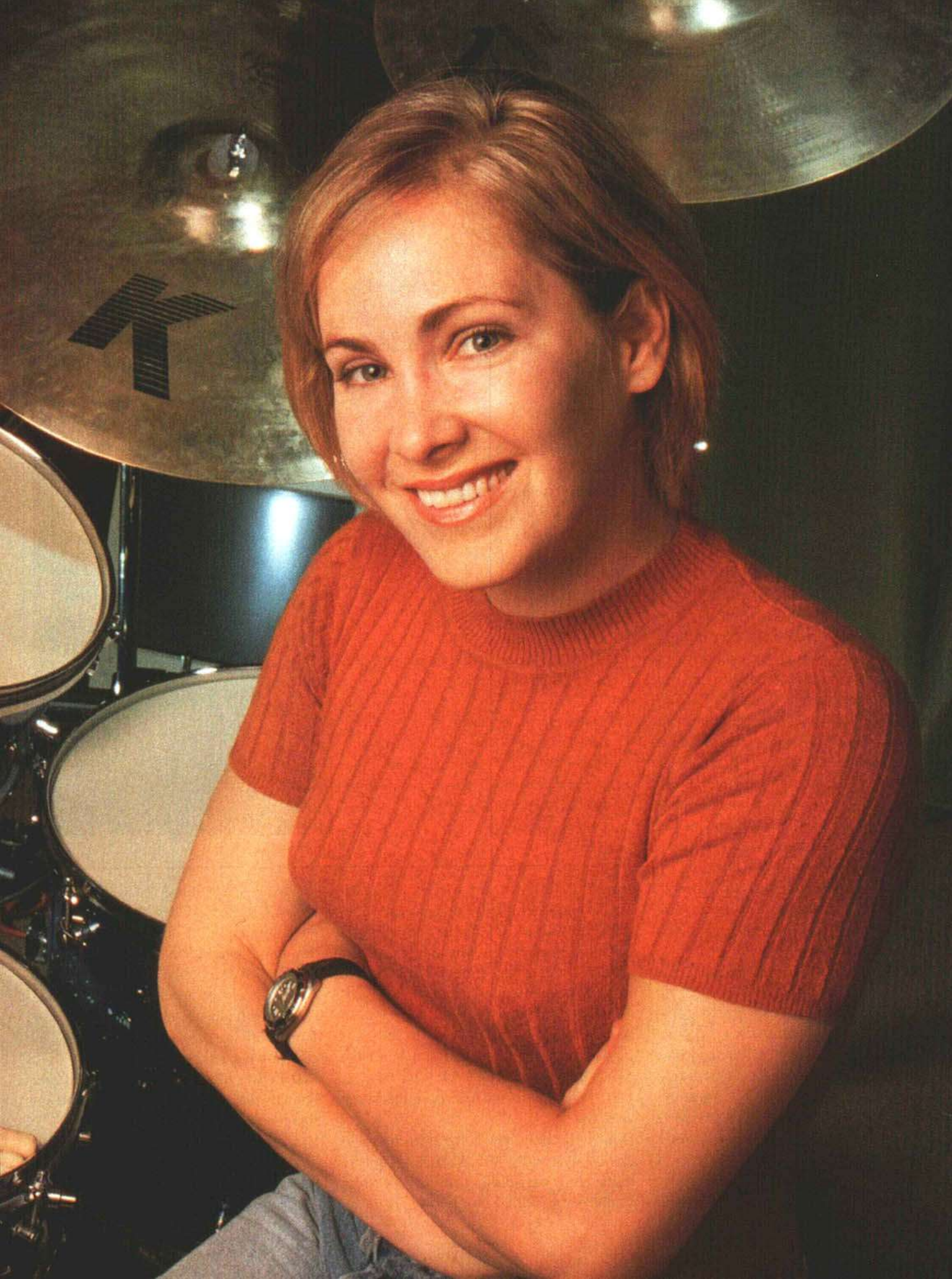
A musician's playing style is derived from a mish-mash of experiences, influences, and feelings. A person's creative expression is unique for that reason. Well, Hilary Jones is proof that the best musicians are those whose influences are welded to their foundation no matter what style of music they're playing.

As for Hilary Jones' playing style, she's known as "Rock 'N' Roll" Jones because it's an attitude that comes out in her playing, even though these days she plays very few rock gigs. Obviously, though, the artists who she's worked with in recent years—Lee Ritenour, Scott Henderson, Doc Severinsen, Eric Marienthal, Badi Assad, and, most recently, Robben Ford—appreciate the edge she brings to their music. They also appreciate the high level of technique and keen sense of musicality that is so prevalent in Jones' playing.

No doubt about it, Hilary's roots are '70s rock, with KISS and AC/DC helping to form her initial musical concepts back when she was growing up in Baltimore, Maryland. But she was also very serious about pursuing her musical education. Upon graduation from the Baltimore School for the Arts, Jones joined the US Navy Band and attended the Armed Forces School of Music, where she graduated with honors.

Of course, the big issue—and an unfortunate one—is that Jones has had to deal with the hurdles that come with being an accomplished *female* drummer. In fact, Hilary dislikes the term, as "female drummer" puts her into a department separate from other drummers. But in her years of struggle to be accepted, even she loses sight of the courage it took to buck a stereotype and to follow her heart.

For a moment, Hilary allows herself to address the issue. "Many women have come up to me at gigs, told me how much they wanted to be a drummer, and for whatever reason didn't do it. I've always wondered how many other great drummers there could have been had they not been discouraged—women who could have been trendsetters. Would we have had players as influential as Dave Garibaldi, Vinnie Colaiuta, or even Steve Gadd if these women had been allowed to pursue their dreams?"



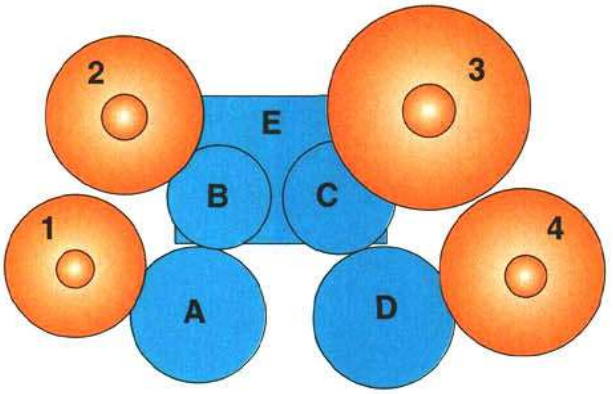
MD: What got you started in music?
Hilary: My dad was a musician. He retired when I was three and would play music on the weekends. He had been in the Academy band in Annapolis, but when he had a family to support, he started a business of his own.

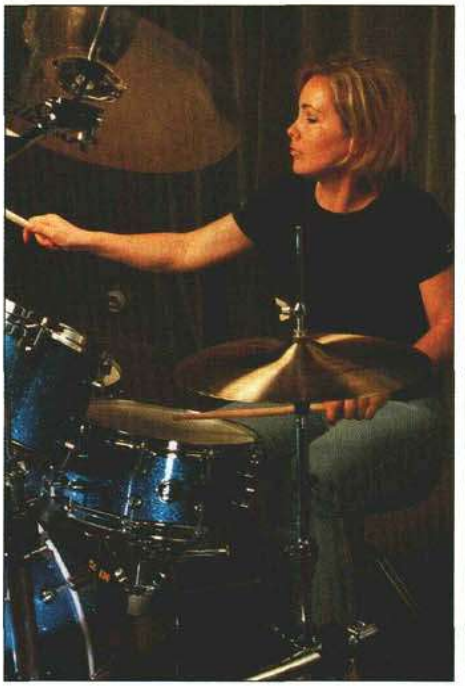
My dad was pretty supportive, except he didn't really play around the house. He's a classical pianist, but my two older sisters were dominating the soundwaves in the household. They were always playing the radio, so I was influenced by the pop and rock 'n' roll they were listening to. I feel like '70s radio was my music too because I heard so much of it growing up.
MD: When did drums enter the picture?
Hilary: I don't recall ever consciously deciding to play the drums. It was always a given that playing drums was what I wanted to do. Whenever anyone challenged me with, "What is your *real* job going to be?" I would get very indignant and say, "I'm gonna play drums and that's all there is to it." When you're younger you don't really think of the realities of how hard it is, but I sure found out.
MD: When did you start playing?
Hilary: Not until I was fourteen. I got my first drumset then after badgering my parents about it. They tried to pawn a guitar off on me—it's much quieter instrument—but finally they relented.

My dad had a printing company that serviced a lot of the architects in downtown Baltimore. He needed a messenger, so he said, "I'll make you a deal. I'll pay you seventy-five cents an hour, but I'll keep the money, and at the end of the summer I'll match whatever you've earned so you can get your drumset." It was cool that he made me work for it. Plus my dad would drive me to gigs when I first started out. Having the support of your parents is so important.
MD: Did you have a basement to practice in?
Hilary: Yes. I looked forward to going down there every day after school to practice. I would put on my records and play along. There were four in particular—KISS's *Destroyer,* Bad Company's *Running With The Pack,* Alice Cooper's *Love It To Death,* and Elton John's *Caribou.* They were my sisters' records; I didn't really have records of my own yet.

I remember being able to play a beat from the get-go because I had spent so much time listening to the radio and playing air drums. Plus, I started out in a drum corps, so I already knew the rudiments before I had a set, and my hands were okay. My sister was a majorette in this little drum corps and she said, "They need drummers." I was dying to do it, so it was a good way to get started and learn the basics before I got on the kit.
MD: Were there specific drummers you were into?
Hilary: Initially it was the music, and to this day it's really still like that. Of course there were particular drummers—John Bonham was a big favorite. My first concert was KISS and AC/DC. Talk about groove! Put on AC/DC's *Back In Black;* the beginning of "You Shook Me" is what drumming is all about. Neil Peart, Narada Michael Walden, Alex Van Halen, and Terry Bozzio were also influences. As I started to listen to other kinds of music, Tony Williams became an influence, and also Roy Haynes.
MD: Were there things you recall consciously working on that perhaps you saw someone else doing?
Hilary: I remember in the community I lived in, the status thing was to have a pretty fast foot. I remember specifically trying to work on that and playing John

Hil's Kit





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Rock 'N' Roll Jones

These are the albums that Hilary listens to for inspiration.

Artist	Album	Drummer
Jeff Beck	Wired	Narada Michael Walden Jan Hammer Richard Bailey Ed Green
Led Zeppelin	Houses Of The Holy	John Bonham
Steely Dan	Aja	Rick Marotta Bernard Purdie Ed Greene Jim Keltner Paul Humphrey Steve Gadd
Emmylou Harris	Wrecking Ball	Larry Mullen Jr. Brian Blade
Bill Bruford	One Of A Kind	Bill Bruford
The Tony Williams Lifetime	Believe It	Tony Williams
Pretenders	Pretenders II	Martin Chambers
Joni Mitchell	Court And Spark	John Guerin

Bonham's triplets on "Good Times Bad Times." I remember playing that all the time, from real slow until I had it up to speed. Then I got to the point where my feet were pretty good, in fact to where I probably overplayed on the bottom half. I've listened to some tapes of when I was in the Navy band and I was playing a lot of bass drum stuff, just because I could.

I mentioned Neil Peart as an influence, and I was in a band that played a lot of Rush tunes, which was very cool. It was a three-piece and we tried to play all the stuff note-for-note, so I spent a lot of time with that. That was definitely the technically adventurous music of our day, and it probably helped me develop more ability. In that same band we did a Led Zeppelin song called "Hots On For Nowhere" off the *Presence* album, which I really worked on. It had a half-time shuffle feel, which I hadn't done a lot of. I admired how Bonham built the song and where he chose to leave space and where he chose to fill. He saved a really cool fill for the end.

MD: What was the game plan for your playing?

Hilary: I guess the initial game plan was just to be in a band. In high school I was in a rock 'n' roll band with my high school sweetheart, and I thought we'd just get a record deal and the rest would be history. I wasn't really prepared to leave home at eighteen years old and start making a living playing the drums. I needed more experience and to learn more.

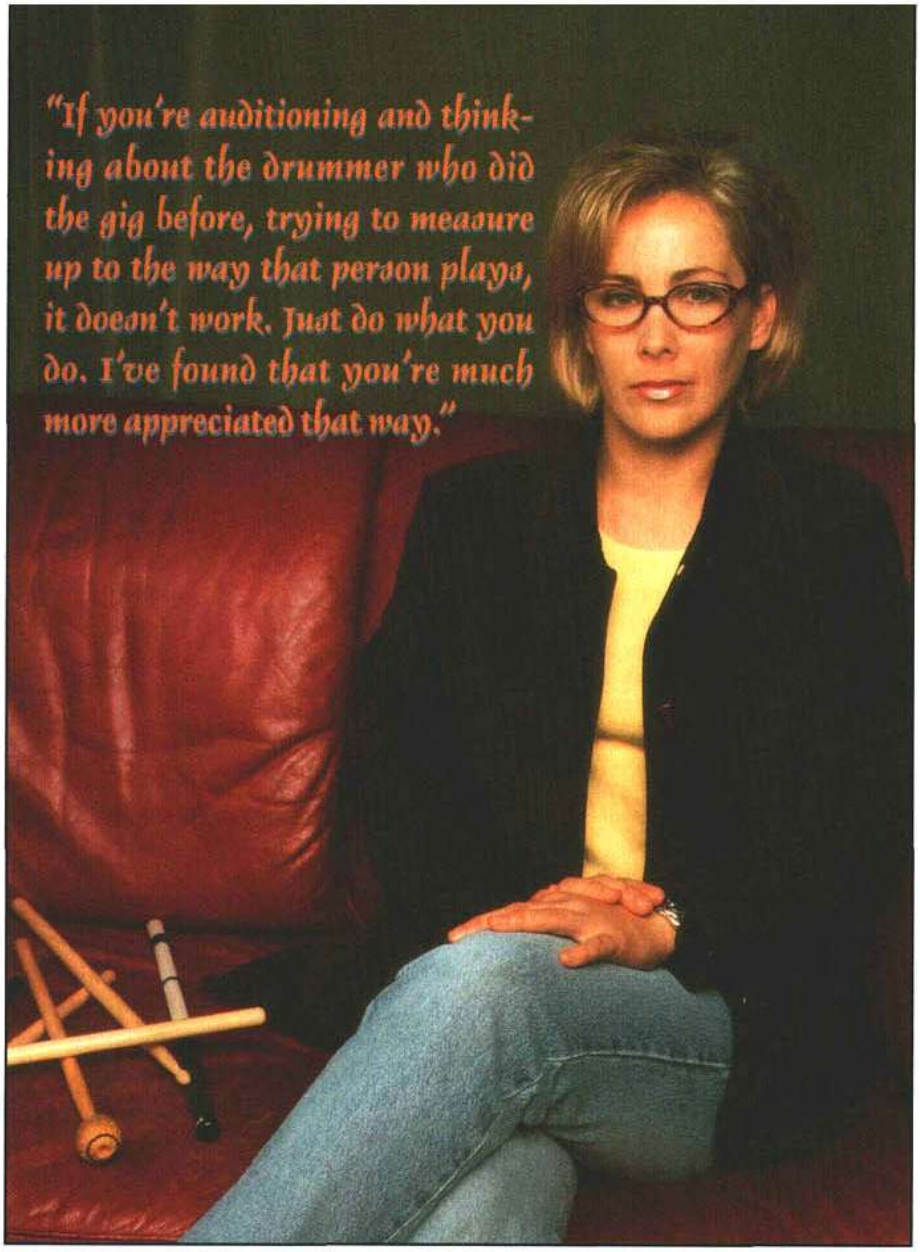
My dad had been in the service Academy Band, and my drum teacher/mentor/best friend, Mike Shepherd, was in The Naval Academy Band. They both suggested that, instead of going to college, I could go into the service for the same four-year commitment, and the Navy would pay me right away and train me. They have a music school with a program that is six months long, and then you go out and play. I thought about the idea, and it did make sense because I really did want to be a musician and I admired and respected my dad and Mike. I knew they had my best interests at heart, so I followed their advice.

It was at the Naval Academy where I received most of my formal training, although I studied with Mike in high school. Mike has been a constant source of inspiration and help throughout my career. Instead of just going through technical things with me, he has gotten into the deeper concepts of time, how things feel, and the body connection.

I was stationed in San Francisco, and when I got out, I began to build my career as a civilian from there. It worked out great that I was stationed there because I could have just as easily been stationed in Charleston, South Carolina. So the good Lord was looking out for me there. The Bay Area was great because it is very multi-cultural and there are so many different kinds of things going on musically. I was able to play a variety of styles with a bunch of different people, so that was a real advantage.

MD: What did you learn from your time in the service?

Hilary: I always say that, in the military, I learned how to play the drums and clean toilets. I always had "head detail" for some reason, so I can clean a toilet like nobody's business, [laughs] As far as playing goes, reading had always intimidated me. When I got into school band in junior high, I kind of faked it because I wanted to get in the band. I didn't really know how to read. I got a little more confident after studying with Mike, but in the service, particularly at the school, they focused heavily on that skill—putting a chart in front of us and having us read it down. When I was going there, the emphasis was still very much on big band,



which really helped with reading.

I enjoyed the first two years of my enlistment, but at that point, I think the challenge was over and I was anxious to move on and branch out. Had it been a two-year commitment, it would have been perfect.

MD: What did you do after the service?

Hilary: I stayed in San Francisco for a couple of years. Then I went back to Baltimore for about ten months and worked in an R&B horn band. I just needed to regroup, and by sheer accident I saw an ad for this band and ended up doing the gig. We did a lot of Chicago tunes. It was great fun, and it was just what I needed at the time.

MD: When did you work with Maria Muldaur?

Hilary: That was my very first tour after I had gone back to the Bay Area. She is the person who hipped me to all the New Orleans stuff. She had a lot of that kind of stuff and very cool blues in her set. I think she really let me audition as a favor to a friend. I played a few songs and then she said, "We're going to do a second-line now," and I said, "What's that?" She kinda rolled her eyes, but she sang the rhythm for me and we ended up doing the tune—and unbelievably, she hired me. Later on she said she hired me because I had a pretty natural feel for it.

As you can see, I really did learn from every single gig that I've had. It's cool to realize that you don't always have to

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know everything there is to know to get a gig, because there were certainly people who were a lot more qualified than I was.

MD: What was your first tour like?

Hilary: It was pretty rough. We were traveling in an RV, and although we had hotel rooms, we had to share rooms. We didn't have a crew, so we had to carry our own gear, which can be very exhausting over the course of a long tour.

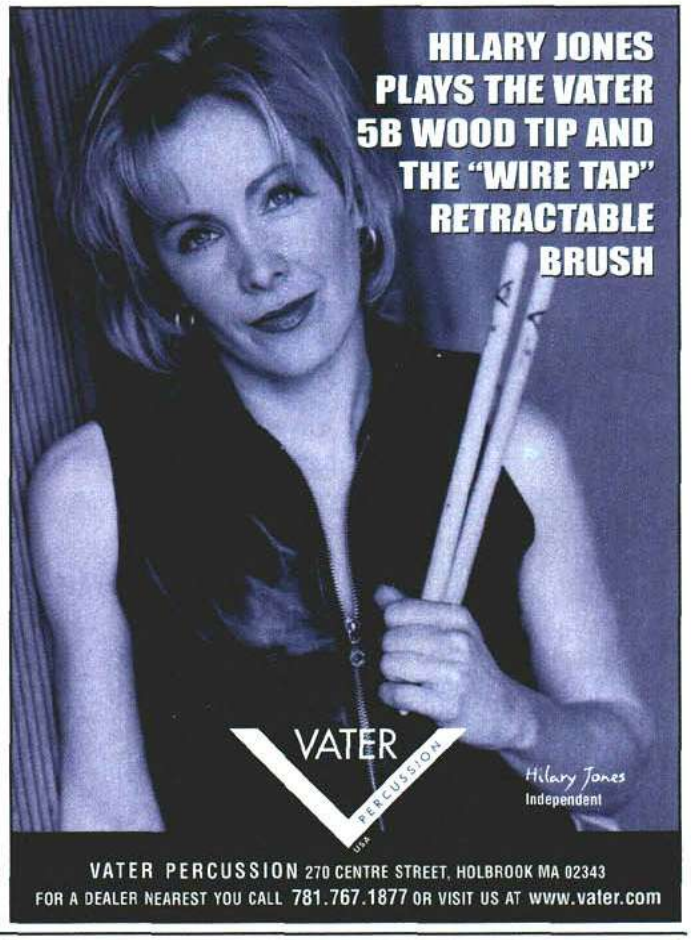
MD: Aren't shared rooms a problem when you're the only woman?

Hilary: Maria thought it might be a problem, but I ended up rooming with the keyboard player, who is a really good friend. I don't think I would do that now, but it didn't matter to me at the time. I felt completely safe and comfortable with the situation, and I just wanted to play drums. Now I feel like when I'm on the road I need my space. I really cherish my alone time in my hotel room because it's the only place to be alone.

MD: Did anybody through your life ever try to discourage you because you were a girl?

Hilary: No. As a matter of fact, no one even mentioned that until I moved to Los Angeles. Maybe it was because I was from a smaller town, but two weeks before I got my first kit, I was in a rock 'n' roll band and I was just barely starting to play. We were all so innocent that it never occurred to us. It was, "Hil plays drums, let's jam."

I never felt that being a female drummer was an issue until I moved to Los Angeles. LA is an industry town, and it always surprises me that there would be such an attitude in a big city. This industry professes to be so progressive, cosmopolitan, and



open-minded. But I've met a few people who are open-minded—as long as you think the way they do.

When I first moved to LA, the only gigs people asked me about were for all-chick bands, and I just didn't want to do that. I've always rebelled against that. I just want to be like anybody else: I want to do what I do, play the way I play, and either you like it or you don't.

I did do one all-girl project [Girlfriend]. When I was young, I met Narada Michael Walden—one of my drum heroes. I was playing in a jazz club in San Francisco one night, and he walked in. I was flabbergasted, and we talked. I was green, young, and wide-eyed. I just wanted to take a couple of lessons with the guy. He said he was putting a band together, but it was after that point that I learned it was going to be all chicks.

Playing in an all-girl band didn't bother me at the time, for whatever reason. Maybe I was just innocent enough that I wasn't aware of the ramifications. To me, if an all-girl project comes together by accident and it's cool, great. Certainly there are chick musicians I like to play with, but if it's just for that reason of being "all girl," it's not of interest to me. But I did do that group and met some wonderful musicians, who I'm friends with to this day.

MD: What was it like working under the tutelage of Narada?

Hilary: It was great—just his positive energy. When I was in the studio with him, I realized why he was such a successful producer. He's got a real talent for bringing the best out of people. He makes you feel so good and special, and that's a good feeling. I think that's what a good producer does.

MD: What did you know about recording at that point?

Hilary: Nothing. Zero. I was so thrilled to be in that situation with a guy like that.

MD: Was it scary?

Hilary: Yes it was. But again, he just made me feel so comfortable, and he was so nurturing to my drumming. He knew I looked up to him, and I think he knew conceptually I aspired to play like him, so we were on the same page.

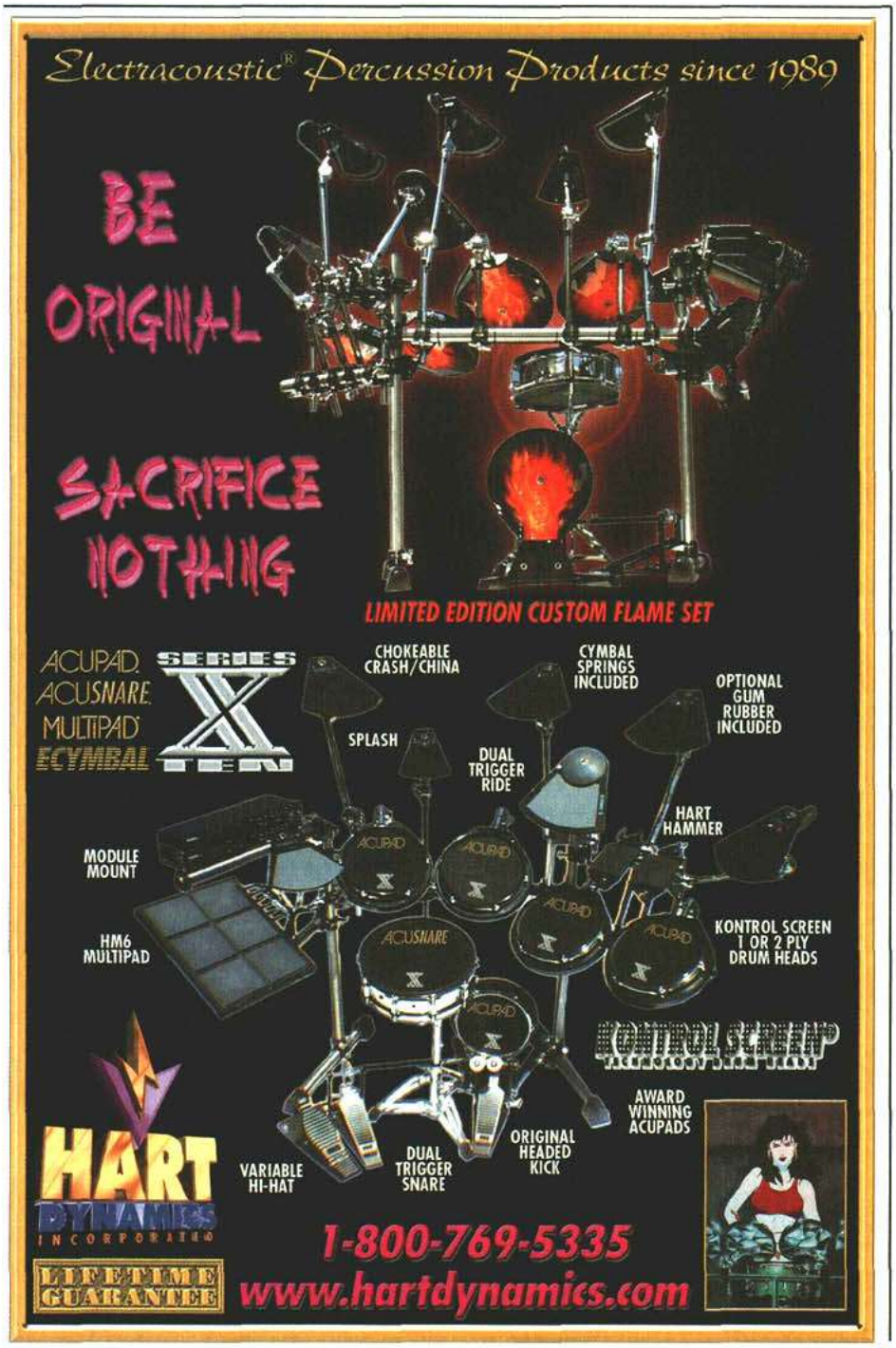
That was the greatest thing about that first record that I heard with him on it—Jeff Beck's *Wired.* It really helped me to realize that I wanted to play some different kinds of music, more improvisational kinds of things. With fusion, there are some records more on the jazzier side and some more on the rock side, and I could latch onto that record because it was close enough to what I already loved—rock 'n' roll—but it was instrumental and improvisational. I had never really heard that before, and I loved it. It was just another building block, another thing to learn, and another direction to explore.

MD: How long did you work with Narada and that band?

Hilary: That lasted a year or two. We did a big showcase for some record companies, but nothing happened and everybody went their separate ways. I have some great demos that will never see the light of day.

MD: When did you leave the Bay Area?

Hilary: In '92. I was there for about eight years.



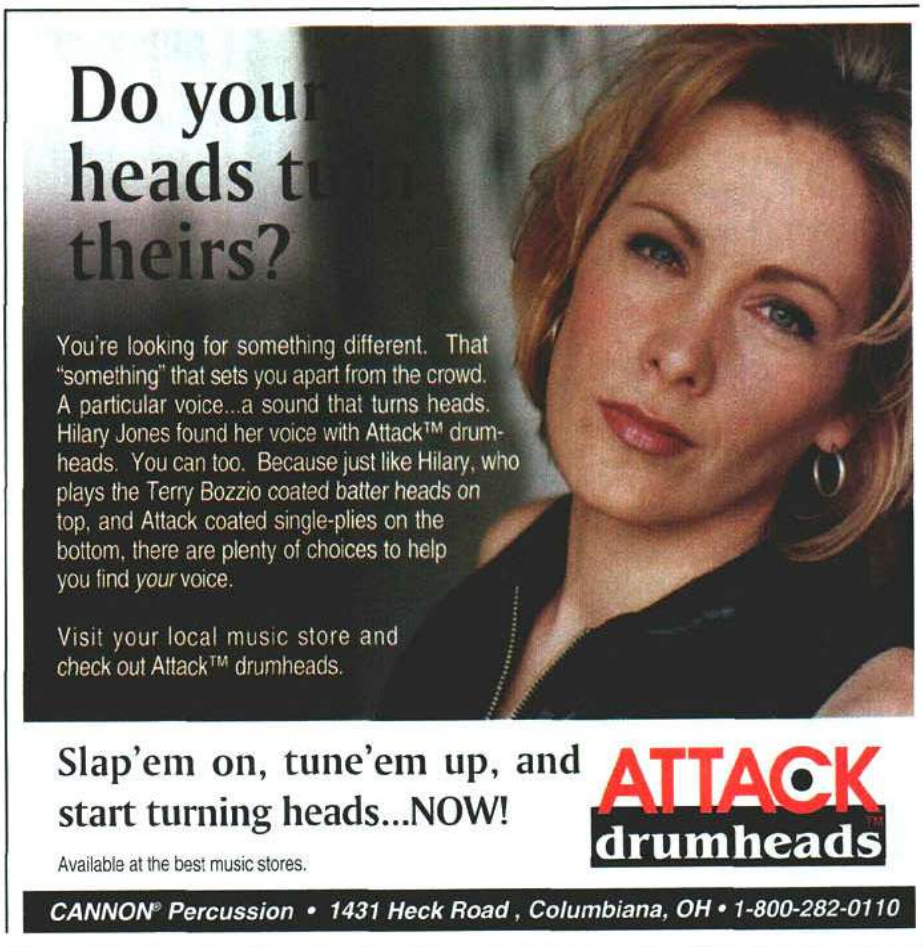
MD: You were doing very well in the Bay Area, so why the move?

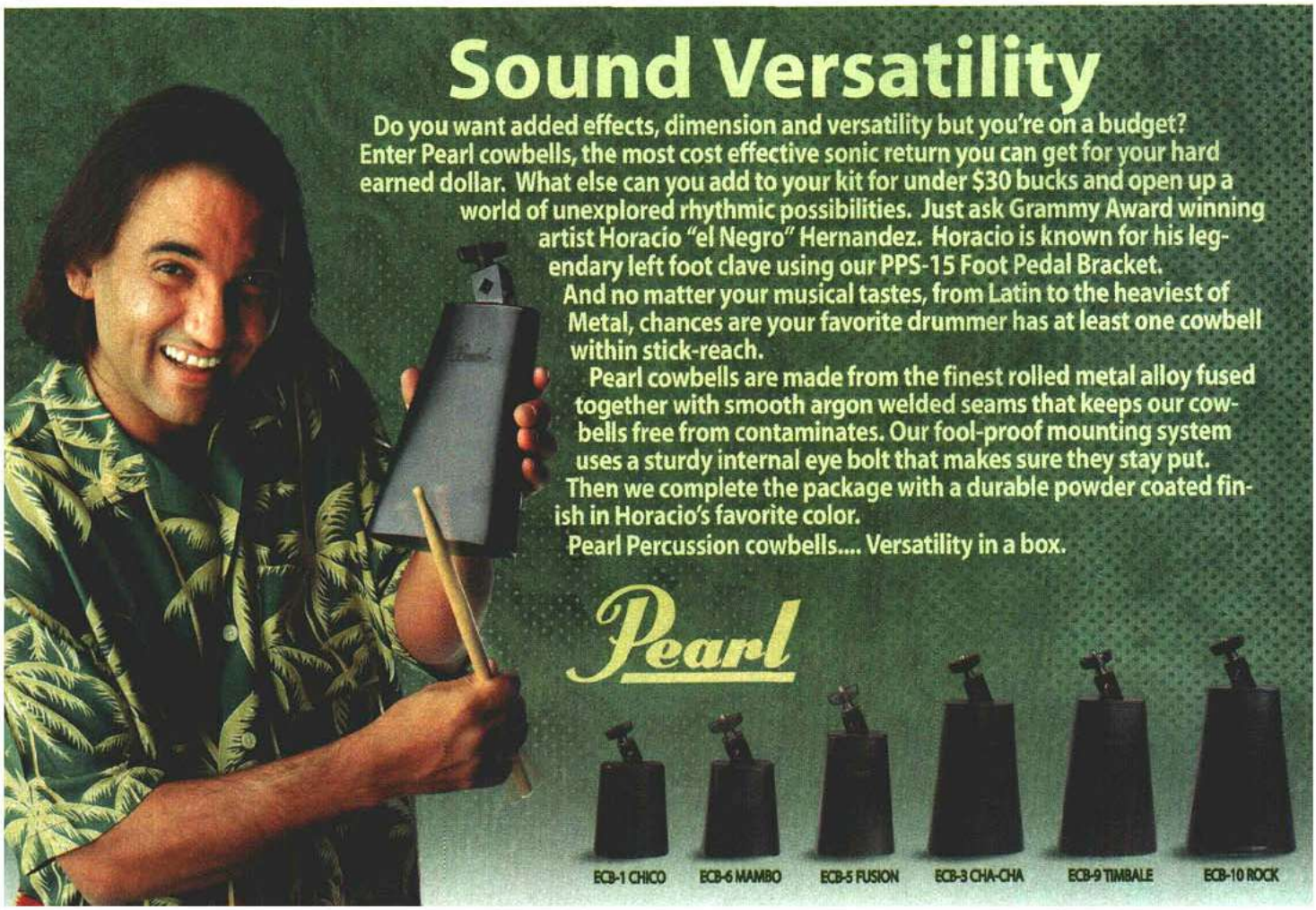
Hilary: It's a great place, but it's a scene unto itself. Los Angeles is an industry town. More tours leave out of here and more recording happens here. I came to LA to get to the next step. So I came down here and started doing some gigs, one of which was Scott Henderson and Tribal Tech.

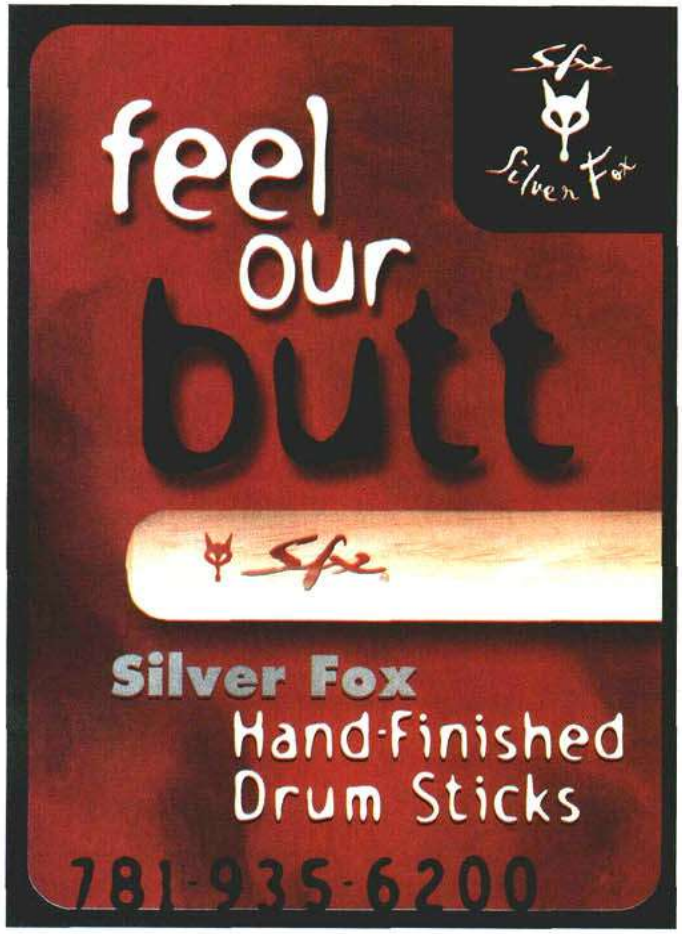
MD: Wasn't it scary to come into a new scene?

Hilary: A couple of friends of mine lived down here, but I did hear about a songwriter who was preparing for a showcase and rehearsing three or four weeks. He was going to pay a minimal salary, but it made me feel a little more secure to have something when I first came down. But mostly I was flying by the seat of my pants.

I drove down to LA in my ten-dollar car—literally, I paid ten bucks for this car—with my dog Spot and my drums in the back. I didn't come to town with much money in my pocket, but I'm the kind of person who has more guts than brains sometimes, and I just thought it was time







Hilary Jones

to do it. I didn't know what was going to happen. Thankfully the good Lord is looking out for me. I've been blessed, and I'm thankful for what I've done thus far and to all those who have supported me, like some of the drum companies.

MD: Who are the companies you're associated with, and could you tell us about some of your equipment?

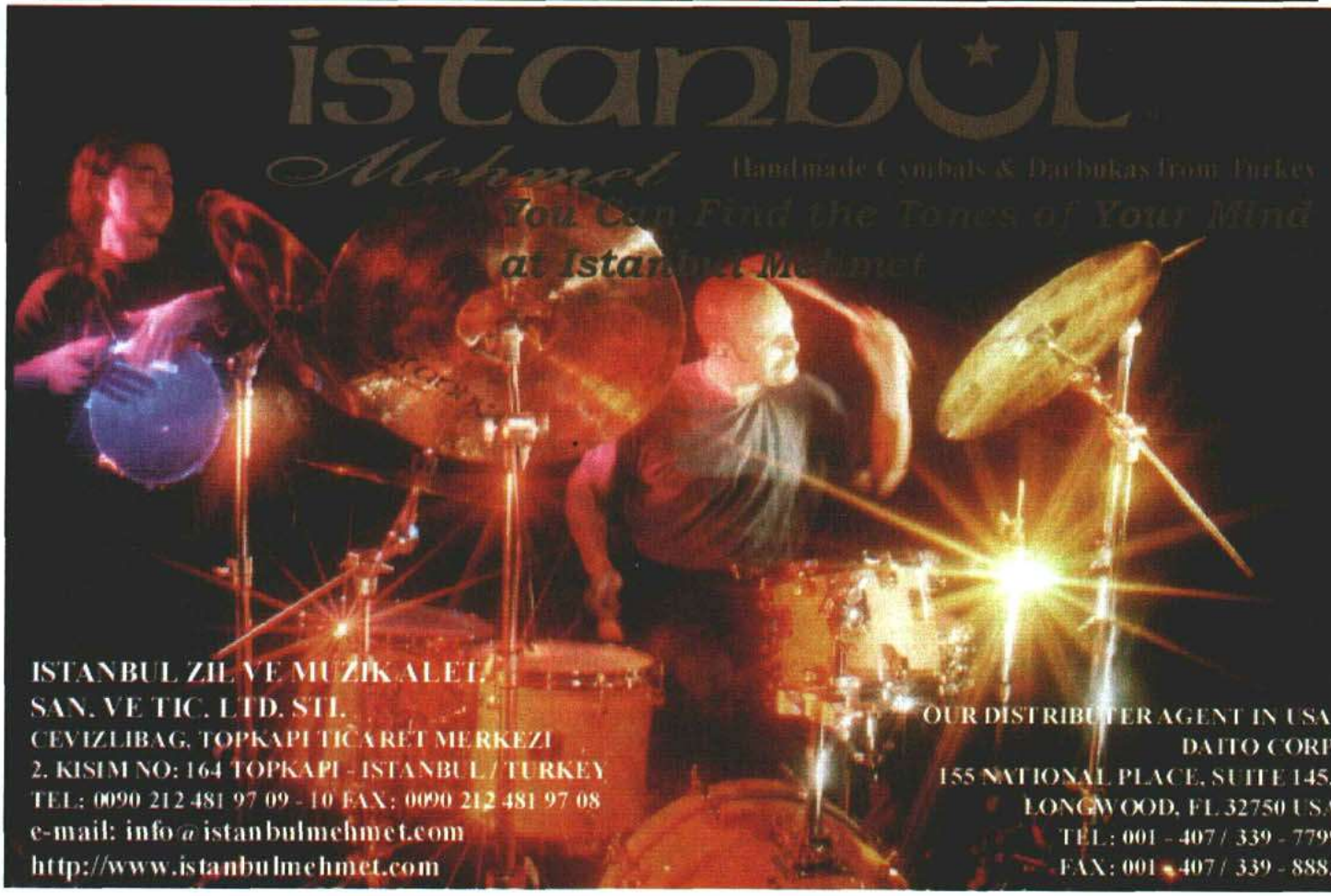
Hilary: The Zildjian people have been so great, and DW, Gibraltar, Vater, and Attack too. It's really the combination of all those companies' instruments that makes it possible for me to do what I do.

MD: What is important to you about a drumset?

Hilary: Obviously the sound. DW's Collector series is typically a thin shell with a reinforcement ring, which is the hip drum of today. I do like that, but they have another line called their Workshop series, which has straight 6-ply shells. With that you have a little more sound coming back at you, because it has a few more overtones. Because we drummers are playing an acoustic instrument, we often have to compete with loud guitar amps. I had DW make me a kit where I could feel that I had more sound coming back at me.

Cymbals are important. When you make a change to, say, a ride cymbal, it can really change your concept. The way your cymbals react is as integral to your touch and feel as your drums are. All the cymbals in my setup complement each other, yet they have enough difference to create the sounds I hear in my head.

MD: What's been the most challenging gig you've had thus far?



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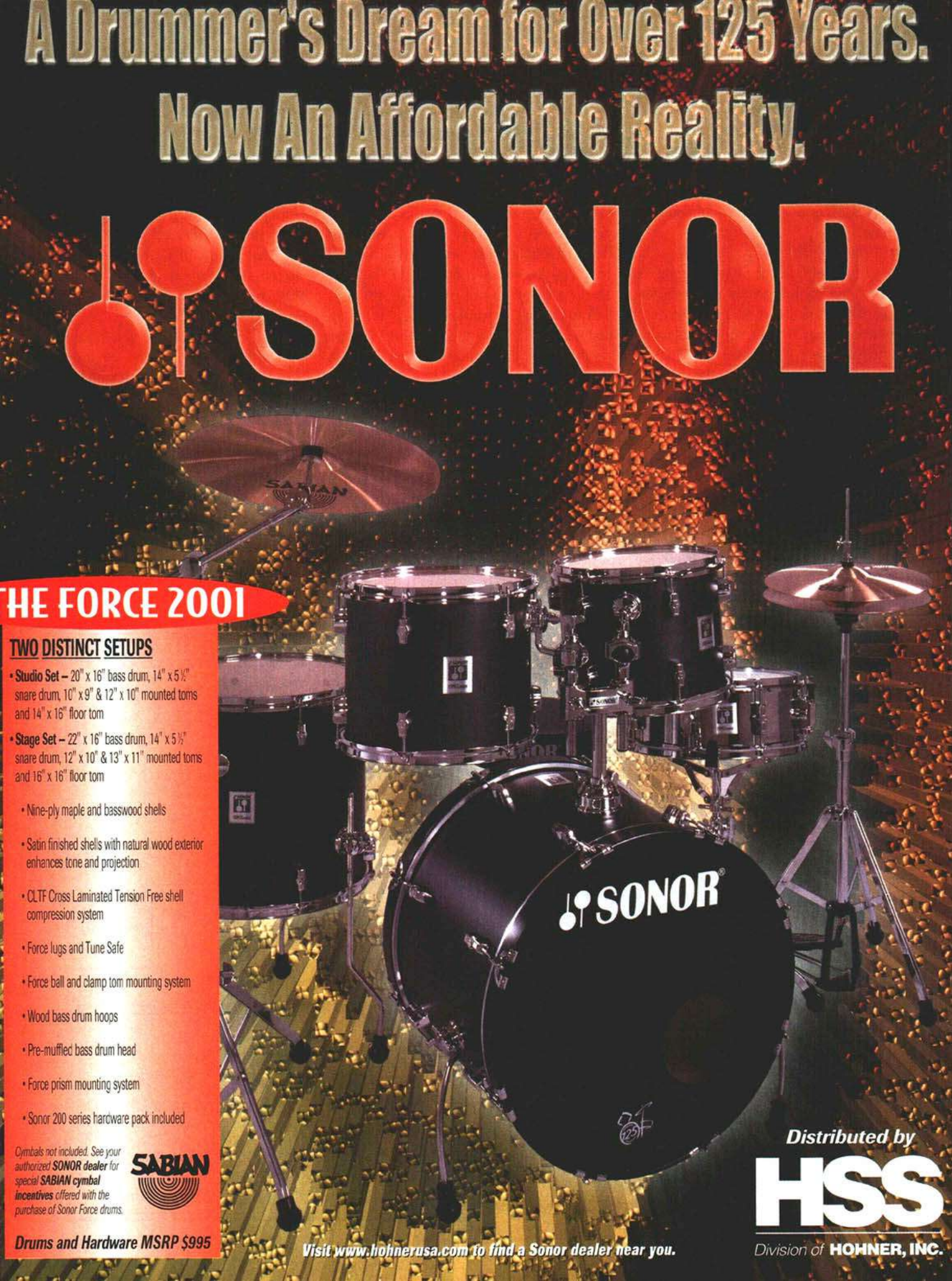

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Hilary: This sounds cliche, but everything is challenging in a certain way. When I went out on the road with Tribal Tech, that was challenging in that it was physically demanding. I'm a hard hitter, and I don't like to let up until the show's over. But that music is like a musical Olympics. You're playing a lot, most of the time.

MD: How did you prepare for that?

Hilary: I have to say I've never prepared for anything. I know that sounds terrible, but I'm kind of a last-minute person. I remember when I was supposed to go over to Korea to play a gig with Lee Ritenour, they sent me the CDs, but for whatever reason, I didn't start studying them until I was on the plane on the way over. Whenever I play or audition, I just sit down and play what I feel. I play what comes to me. I just try to play the music, and maybe what gets me by is I have some sort of natural feel for the music...or at least in the way I hear it...I don't really know. On all the different gigs I've done, I've tried to be true to what the music is, but play it like *I* play it, to bring myself to it. I don't consciously think, "This is *this* kind of gig." I just play the way I play and it seems to work.

MD: Have there been any grueling auditions?

Hilary: Not really. The people I've auditioned for have been pretty cool. I think if you go in and be who you are, you're going to be a lot more comfortable. Not that I have that down pat, but I've worked on it. If you're auditioning and thinking about the drummer who did the gig before, trying to measure up to the way that person plays, it doesn't work. Just do what you do. I've found that you're much more appreciated that way.

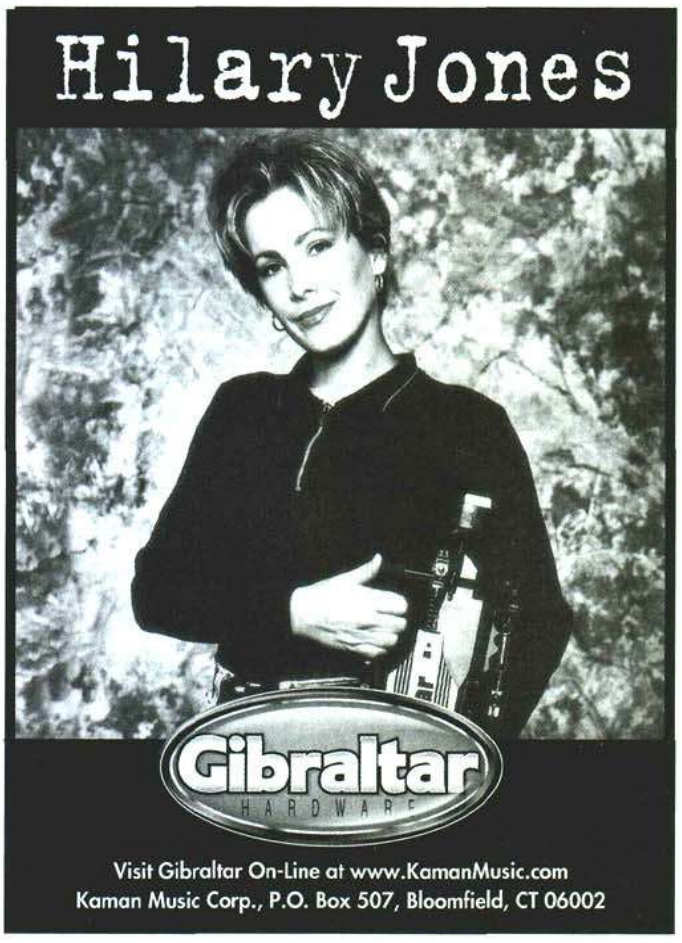
MD: What's been the most enjoyable music for you to play?

Hilary: The gig with Robben Ford. I've got to say it just doesn't get any better than that, and on all levels. Everyone was so cool. I can't say enough about Robben Ford. He's the consummate gentleman, the consummate musician, and he's wonderful to work for. I love his musicianship, I love his songwriting, and I respect him immensely.

To me, playing music is about moments. I can't really define it that well, but when you're playing and the music is going by and you're in the moment and everybody is looking at everybody, going "Yeah," it's amazing. Everything we do in between in our lives—the practicing, the writing, and the work we put in—is just to get to the next musical moment that feels like that. I think that's what we're all living for—to live more of those moments.

MD: What do you think Robben needed from you as a player?

Hilary: I don't think he was ultra specific. The record he did that we toured on, *Supernatural,* was more in a pop vein. It was songs. And he's such a great singer. On that tour, he was promoting that record, but we also did some of the instrumental stuff from *Tiger Walk,* which Steve Jordan played on, and it's one of my favorites. He's the kind of drummer who likes space. From the background of music I've done prior to this, I can always trim it down, play less stuff, and give it more space in places. Robben even said to me, "In certain places, you can even stop,



break it way down, and build back up."

Robben has a lot of heart and soul and passion in his playing. Ultimately, I think what makes somebody like a gig or not is really how you relate to the music on a deeper level. It's almost like a kindred spirit type of thing—a total connection—and when it's like that, it's so great.

MD: Does it ever intimidate you to think about the previous drummers who played with these people? You mentioned Steve Jordan, and I know Vinnie Colaiuta played with Robben.

Hilary: Oh yeah—I say, "Forget about it!" Vinnie played on *Supernatural.*

MD: What are your thoughts on practice?

Hilary: I've played more gigs than I've practiced, although both things have their advantages. Certain things you just assimilate by playing live. And there are some things you're just going to have to work out in the practice room.

It seems like there was a certain period of time in my development when I was doing a lot of creative gigs, as opposed to casuals. I was doing gigs where I had to play, so it forced me, without my really knowing it, to rise to the occasion. I'm sure I stunk for a portion of time, but experience is what made the difference. When you look at yourself in the mirror every day, you don't see the subtle changes. But the changes were happening and there was definitely an evolution. I guess everything I've done before this, and what I'm doing now, will prepare me for what's next. And what's next for me? I'm getting ready to record my own record.

MD: What are your plans for that?

Hilary: That will be instrumental and improvisational, but also groove-oriented. I want the record to be very earthy-sounding. So I'm going to go for a more acoustic sound, with the drums miked in a minimal way. I'm going for a real bare-bones sound—B3, Wurlitzer, guitar, and bass—go in and play, with not many overdubs, just a nice live-sounding record.

MD: Is this self-composed material?

Hilary: I'm putting most of it together, although I'll probably end up covering a few things too. I'm very excited about this because I've always been a sideperson. This is the next step for me. I think everybody reaches a point where they have to put something of their own out, for the sake of personal creative expression. I'm putting it out independently, and I will sell it on my Web site—hilaryjones.com.

MD: Are there any other gigs you've done that particularly stand out?

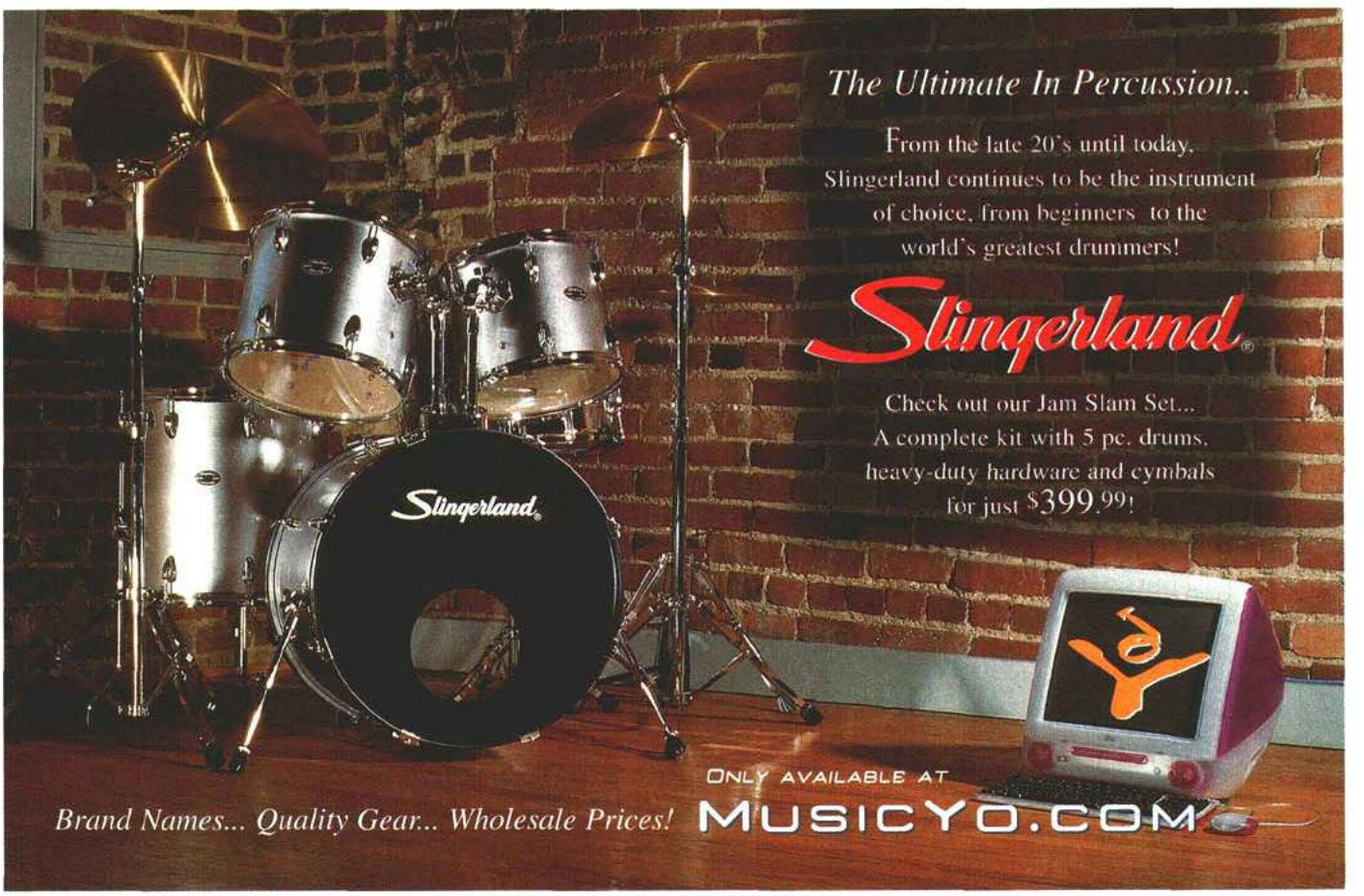
Hilary: I got to work with Dave Grusin at one point when I was working with Lee Ritenour. I've worked with Jimmy Haslip on occasion, and that's been great. And I recently played Farm Aid with Badi Assad, whose record *Chameleon* I got to play on a few years ago.

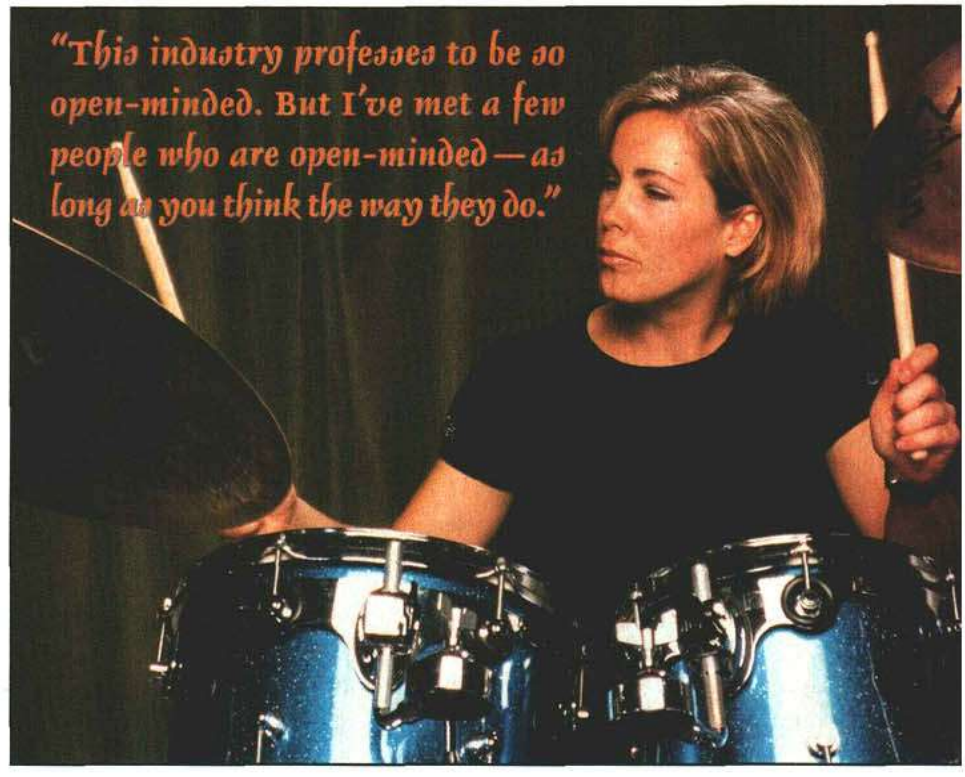
MD: What would you say your assets are as a player?

Hilary: I think I have a good feeling for music. I'm instinctive, I play with a pretty good groove, and I think I'm pretty aggressive at times too.

MD: What do you think you need to work on?

Hilary: My friends always tell me that I'm overly critical. It's rare that I can find something I've played that I like, so when I'm asked what I need to work on, I tend





to think *everything*. This instrument is a never-ending pursuit. What I would like my goal to be as a player is to have a seamlessness, where you are so at one with your instrument that it's like an appendage, it's a part of you—you think it and it happens. And I'd like to be a little more positive. There are moments when I hit fearlessness, but I would like to be totally in the moment with the music at all times, to pursue being in that space every time I sit down to play.

MD: Are there things you can do during practice to help facilitate those goals?

Hilary: I'm working on a lot of hand/foot stuff, just to get the limbs flowing and limber. I try to practice things so they just flow out, so each limb—or voice—at the drumset is capable of doing anything on command. I'm far away from that, but that's the goal I've set for myself. So I practice exercises I feel lend themselves to that hand-foot stuff—to get everything integrated.

MD: You've been on the road a lot. How does that fit into having a life?

Hilary: Well, it's *my* life. It's always been my life. It's what I do, so I don't think about it too much. Sometimes I think it would be nice to be more at home, but then when I'm home long enough, I feel like I need to get out and play. I love to play, but I think we all want to get to the point where we have choices.

MD: Where does a family fit into things?

Hilary: I'm not necessarily the kind of gal who has a burning desire to have children. I've always thought that if it happens, that would be great. But if it doesn't, that's okay too. I've put a lot into my career and I really enjoy what I do. I've always felt that the best musicians are those who have some balance in their lives. I think that's the biggest challenge, because it seems in this business there's never much of a middle ground. It's a feast-or-famine thing. Who knows what's around the next corner? I'm just into taking it as it comes.

I've tried to learn not to trip out too much about the stuff I can't control. I want to involve myself in more things that I *can* control, like making my own record and being the person who calls the shots and has a creative voice. Hopefully that will be a larger percentage of my life at some point. It doesn't mean I won't be working for anybody ever again. But at least if I can make something that's my very own, something that I'm proud of, I'll be happy.

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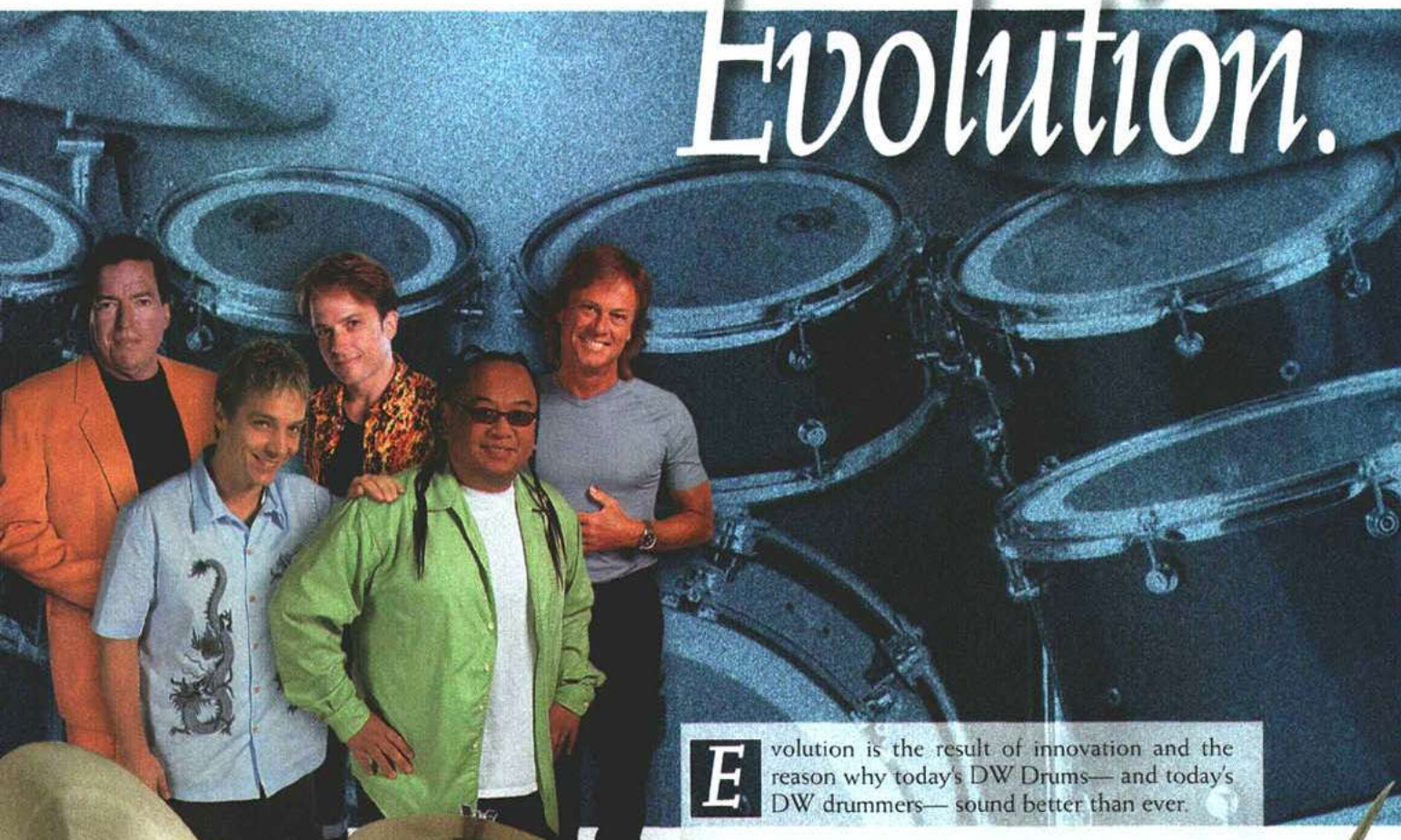

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DW Drum Artists (from left to right): Kenny Dale Johnson (Chris Isaak), Billy Ashbaugh (N' Sync), Denny Fongheiser (Tracey Chapman), Curt Bisquera (Sir Elton John) and Tris Imboden (Chicago).

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Dealing With Loops

Top Session Men Face The Latest Studio Craze Head-On

by Gary Escow

Like it or not, drum loops are an important piece of the recording purple. Truncated portions of live performances that are trimmed so that they repeat at regular intervals (two or four bars, for example), loops serve as building blocks lor songwriters, who often get inspired by these snippets. Increasingly, producers working *on* a budget will lean heavily on rhythm loops, to the detriment of a track and the bank accounts of musicians.

Drummers who can adapt to this new reality—that loops have become an important part of record production—stand a much better chance of getting session work than those who simply throw up their sticks in annoyance when the topic is raised. *Modern Drummer* spoke to three top session players about the state of the art as it relates to loops. Some of what we heard might surprise you.

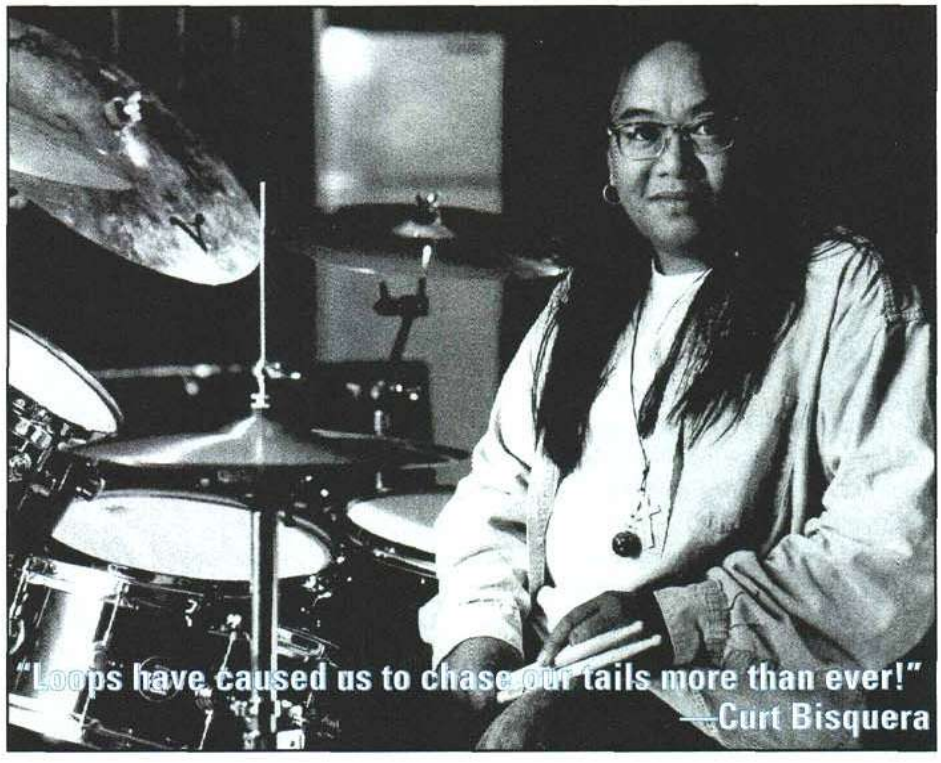
Curt Bisquera is riding high these days. Currently a touring member of Elton John's band, Bisquera fits in as many LA sessions as his schedule permits. He's also the drummer for DVDA, the punk rock band led by *South Park* creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone. "Those boys can really play; don't let their success with the TV show lead you to think otherwise," says Bisquera.

The use of loops—like the craze for programmed drum parts that preceded it—is part of an evolutionary phase that will be around for some time, but may have already peaked, according to Bisquera. Producers often call on him to augment or replace looped drums, and making them feel comfortable is part of the reason for his success. "Playing with or enhancing a loop is primarily what I do when I'm called in for an overdub session. My job in this situation is to find a glove part that works with the loop. I think of it as a variation of the way that James Brown's band, or the Allman Brothers band, was set up, with two drummers coming up with one beat. I smooth things out."

Bisquera agrees that loops can help writers and producers come up with ideas—based on feels that are new to them and that they otherwise wouldn't find. The very fact that these loops never vary can also lend a hypnotic quality that can be artistically fulfilling. Knowing how to add fills that work with the loop keeps him busy. "The first thing a drummer has to do is get the feel of the loop style and really sink into it," Curt says. "That way you won't just come up with your standard fills. You'll learn to add touches that keep a track moving without competing with the loop."

Of course, a drummer will come up with his or her own ideas based on the loop that might be so attractive that the producer will scrap the loop altogether. But Curt says that shouldn't be the drummer's goal: "The most important thing is that the drummer has to *nail* the click track. Sometimes the loop isn't in time with the click. Our job as drummers is to get wedged in time between the click, the loop, and the sequencer. It can be a tricky job. This adds a whole other dimension to drumming, just as the drum machine did."

Then there's the ever-tricky area of studio politics to consider. What happens if a keyboard player, for instance, has programmed a bunch of tracks on top of a loop, without realizing that its time isn't quite right? Do you speak your mind and express the fact that the time isn't locked as tightly as it needs to be, or keep quiet and not risk offending your employer? "That's a good question," Curt says, "and it really depends on who you're working for.



"I played on Elton John's latest CD, *The Road To Eldorado.* Several tracks were me, and Vinnie Colaiuta also played on the album. Pat Leonard produced it. On one of the songs I played, 'Some Day Out Of The Blue,' Pat worked in a way that's really ideal. Rather than wait until all of the other tracks had been completed, he called me in ahead of time. That was key. He'd play some loops for me against some sequenced tracks and tell me the idea that he was going for. He's really good, but he's also smart enough to realize that he needed a drummer's ear ahead of time. I gave him my feedback, and then came back to track my parts later on."

Ignoring the computer revolution will not ensure the survival of the drumming species. "We're drummers, but now we have to know how to use computer-based sequencers," Curt insists. "I use Logic Audio. Let's say I'm in a session where the loop is not perfectly in time, and I point that out to a producer. Rather than waste costly studio time trying to make the best out of a bad situation, I frequently tell them to hand me a 9-gig drive of the song, with separate tracks for all parts. Then I'll go back to my studio and tweak the loop in Logic until it lines up properly against the other parts.

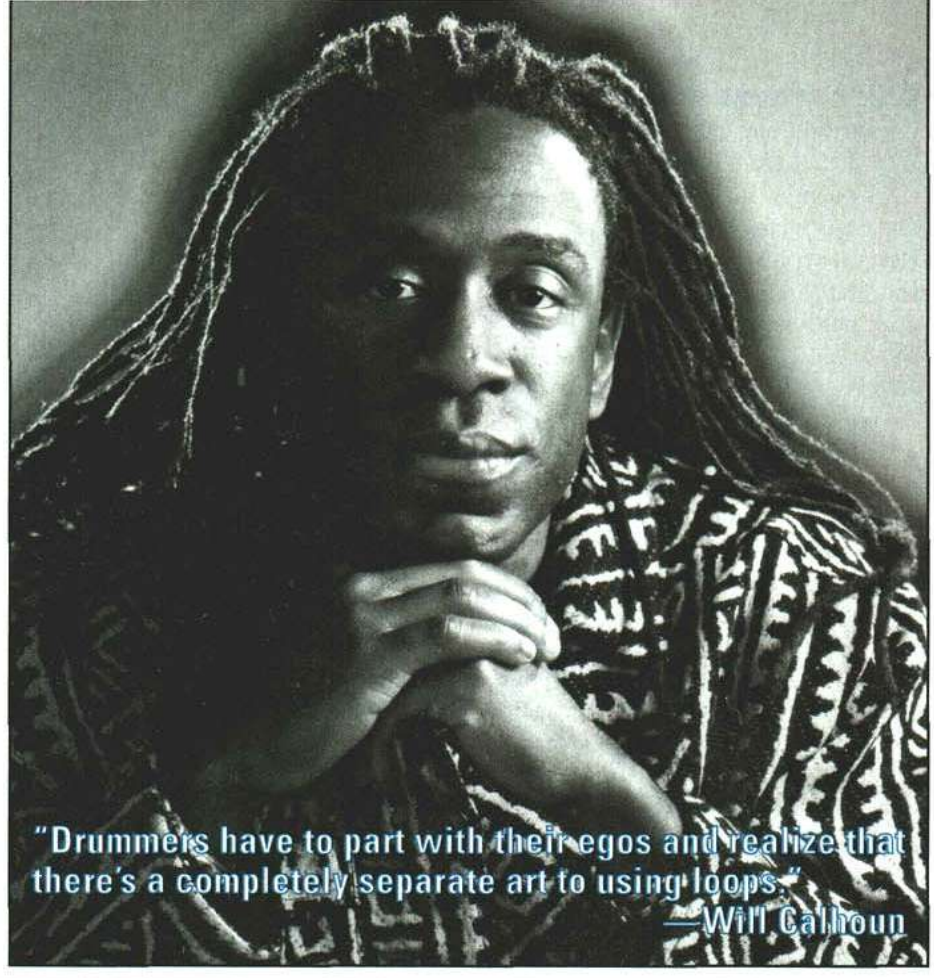
"A lot of people who program loops and drum machines are writers or keyboard players," Curt continues. "They're not generally coming from a groove, time, and feel place like we would as drummers. I know what's in time, and in my sequencer I'll find out, for example, that a loop that's listed at 87 bpm will actually be, say, 87.3469 bpm! So, I'll simply adjust the sequencer's tempo to get it to line up perfectly with the groove, which can help the feel enormously. Then I go back and play live over the original. I guess you could say that loops have caused us to chase our tails more than ever!

"There's no point denying that loops are a big part of the recording process these days," says Curt, "though I don't think they'll stay as popular forever. They *can* be fun to play with. Since the loop provides the constant, we can be free to add colors. Freed of the timekeeping function, a drummer's creativity can really come out. Having all the possibilities—drum programming, loops, and live drumming—adds multiple dimensions to music. That's the phase we're now in. I think that eventually we'll get back to simply using live drummers. Loops are overused today, in my opinion. Overuse and redundancy will wear the public out, but it's led to a popular current drum style, playing in loop style, with no fills."

We caught up with **Will Calhoun** shortly after he'd landed in New York, following a whirlwind tour of Europe. Calhoun—who invites you to catch up with him via his Web site (www.willcalhoun.com)—views loops through an entirely different prism: "Drummers have to part with their egos and realize that there's a completely separate art to using loops."

In order to be able to use them creatively, drummers and other musicians must latch onto a new way of thinking. "Loop artists aren't thinking about the tension-and-release aspect of music that's critical to the way drummers work," Calhoun says. "They're also not thinking about structure, or key changes, or tempo. They're thinking about creating new and exciting *sounds."*

Calhoun is quick to point out that he's not discussing the often banal use of loops as building blocks that remain separate from the rest of a composition. Rather, he's refering to the kind of art that uses them to prod the creator to establish new sounds of his own. "Pharoah Sanders told me that the most important thing you can



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do is experiment with sound," Will says. "I brought all my samples and loops out on tour with him, and he loved it! I used my Wave drums, and lots of loops—some of which I create on the spot. I use these inexpensive little Yamaha and Korg samplers—some of them cost no more than $200—and I record the show. Then I'll take bits of our performance and make loops, which I'll use the next night. The technology is fantastic and cheap—it's really endless now. I'm really interested in the work that a lot of the kids are doing, searching for alternative sounds. The ambient vibe is totally unaffected and honest.

"There's a guy over in London called Stretch," Will continues. "Everything he does is blinding. What Miles did to jazz, he's doing to today's music with his programming. Stretch is a classical pianist as well. I used some of his programming on my *Jungle Funk* CD, which is distributed in America by Zebra Records. Anyone interested in that work can also contact the Black Rock Coalition. *Jungle Funk* is a live record that was recorded in Dornbirn, Austria. We used loops, and recorded in a club that had a studio upstairs. I took the raw tapes—the band had never rehearsed the tunes before the show—and edited them in New York at Unique Recording Studios. I got in a room with a twenty-one-year-old kid, a whiz on Pro Tools, and we edited the record in a day."

His considerable kit chops help Calhoun in his live loop performances. "I use volume pedals to bring in different loops," he says. "I have three drum pedals, a double kick pedal, and hi-hat. I also have five guitar pedals that I run MIDI loops with. I want to control everything myself, not rely on a sound man to get a mix. I send all of my own sounds and effects to a console, and can control all of the levels—including effects sends—myself. We call this way of working 'DJ-influenced world music.'"

A hint from Will: "You shouldn't have a loop repeat over and over again. Things should come in and out. I like to have seven or eight loops going at one time. One will just be a kick drum, for example. Apart from live playing, I really like sitting at a computer, laying things out in a visual way."

What are Will's thoughts on the way loops are used in pop music and smooth jazz recordings? "Those records sound like demos to me," he says. "I don't like to judge people, but most of that music sounds undeveloped. For me, the best way to use loops is as building blocks, layering different ones on top of each other, and creating your own loops to complement the ones you've started with. The inflection of what's going on with a loop brings in a certain type of person, one who's tuned into sound, dialed in. What I want to do is bring in some of the snobs and academic types. These are the ones who have all of the melodies and harmonies, and I want to use loops to bring them together with the skateboarding types to tie together different cultural elements."

Gene Lake migrated to Manhattan to attend the prestigious High School of Performing Arts. Once he hit the road, gigs seemed to find their way to him, and now he's one of the most in-demand play-

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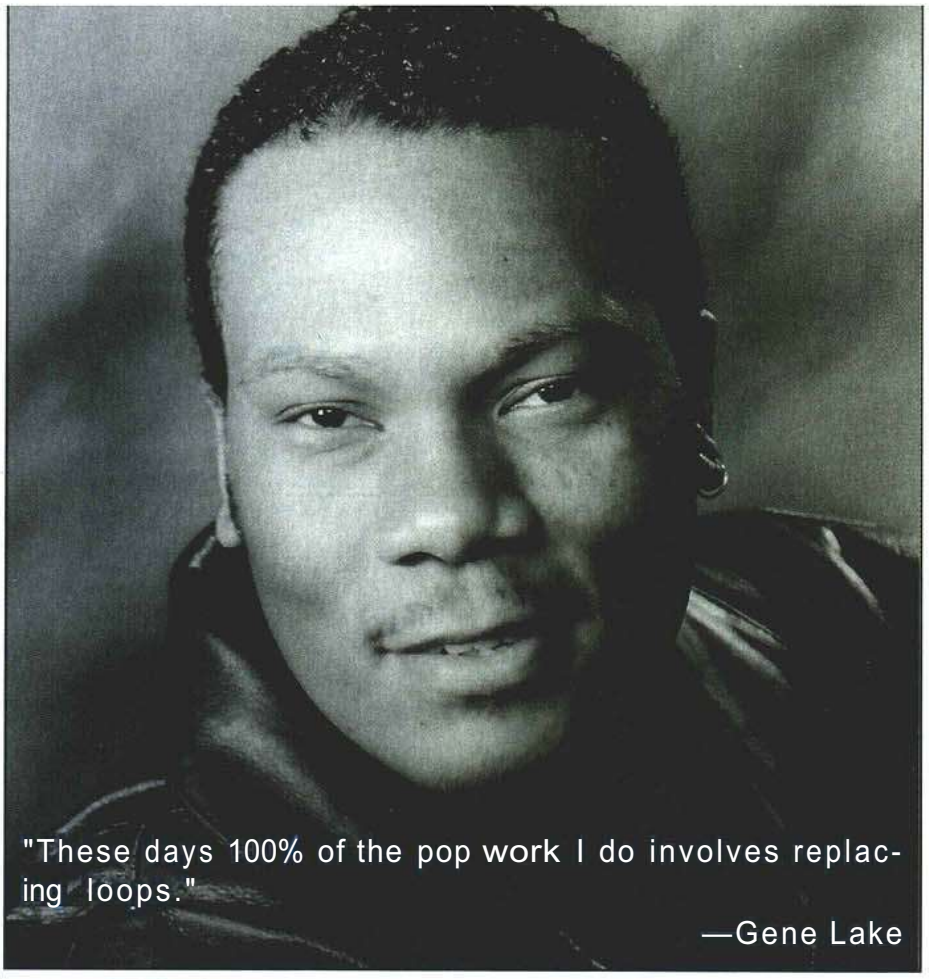

ers on the east coast. We spoke with Lake by cell phone as he was negotiating his way into town for a recording date.

"These days, almost all of the session work I'm doing centers around replacing loops," Lake says. "Producers buy loop discs for ideas, things they can write to. Then they call in a drummer to put a live feel on the track. I guess you could say that our job is to compose the feel of the loop over an entire song; you cop the feel and simulate what the loop is doing, but with a live feel. These days 100% of the pop work I do involves replacing loops.

"I played on two tracks of David Sanborn's last album, *Inside,* which was released last April on Elektra Records," Gene continues. "Replacing loops on that record was difficult. There I was in the studio, playing all by myself. It's rough to create a jazz, interactive feel under those conditions, because there was no one else there! On the tune 'Brother Ray,' I played to the energy of the track. Marcus Miller wrote the song and had already laid down his bass part. He may have replaced it later on, I don't remember. But Marcus had sketched out other parts like horns as

well. I replaced the loop completely.

"On another tune," Gene continues, "the producer might have done what I've noticed before: take the part I played, cut it up, and use my performances as the basis for loops used on the track. That happened with the work I did on D'Angelo's first record. I played down the song, and they ended up sampling bits of my playing and making loops. Producers want that loop-loop sound.

"I really enjoy playing with other players, obviously. I recently did a session with percussionist Bashiri Johnson for an artist named Janita. It was great working with him, and the session was extremely smooth. We tracked over at Sound On Sound, just the two of us playing live together. It was the first session I'd ever done that way—a drummer and percussionist bouncing ideas off each other. Interestingly enough, Bash and I have played on five or six records together, but we'd never met or seen each before this date! Having him playing live, with his spirit there in the room, definitely changed the way I played."

Working this way gave Gene a clearer picture of what the producer was calling for. "The producer, Bash, and I would listen to a song," he says, "and then we'd talk about what the producer wanted. Then Bash and I would confer about how we could best achieve what he was after. On one tune Bash suggested that I take the lead in a section, that he'd come in later. On the other hand, during this same recording date there was another tune that had a percussion loop the producer was insistent on keeping. Knowing he felt that strongly about the loop changed the way I approached my performance."

We asked Lake a pointed question: What if a drum loop doesn't quite work with other parts that may have already been tracked? If a hi-hat, for example, would sound better laying behind the beat, but there's a hat on the loop that pushes, do you work with the existing part or will you try to counter it in some way? How about the politics? Offending a producer is probably not what you want to do.

"Fortunately, I've never been in a position where the politics hurt me," Gene says. "If a hi-hat isn't working with a programmed part, producers will leave the call up to me as the drummer. Maybe once I had to put my foot down. In that scenario the producer will usually scratch the entire loop or isolate the hi-hat, for example, and just cut that out, leaving space for me. I take an overall look at the groove, what works and what doesn't.

"Producers do get demo-itis," Gene says. "I try to feel things out when I arrive at a session. I just did a session last week where the producer was open to what I was hearing. It was obvious where he was trying to go, to tap into a dancey, Michael Jackson type of vibe. Once I locked into his mentality, the session went smoothly, and I replaced all of the loops. That's the political part—knowing when a producer is open to your ideas and how to fit your perspective into his.

"Being a successful session player involves being able to quickly figure out what producers want. The intangible is your talent, the ability to both give what's asked for *and* supply your own energy. As a player, you need to be able to cop what the producer wants you to do first, then add your creativity to the extent it's asked for—and no more."

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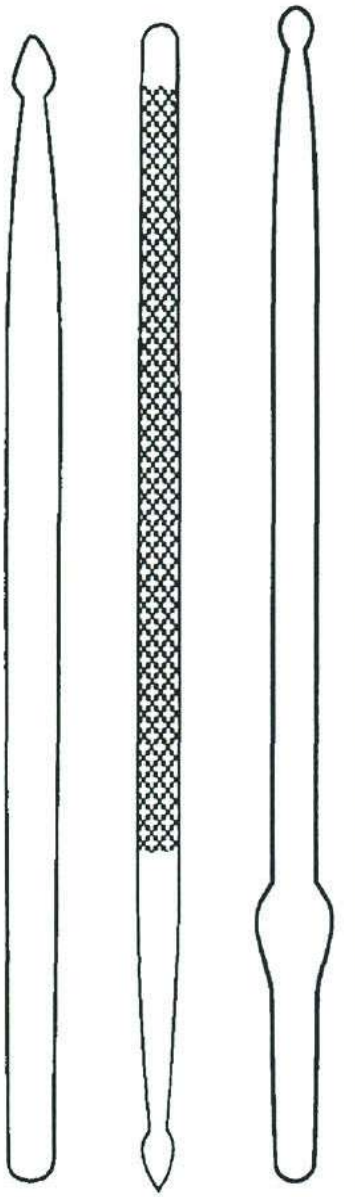
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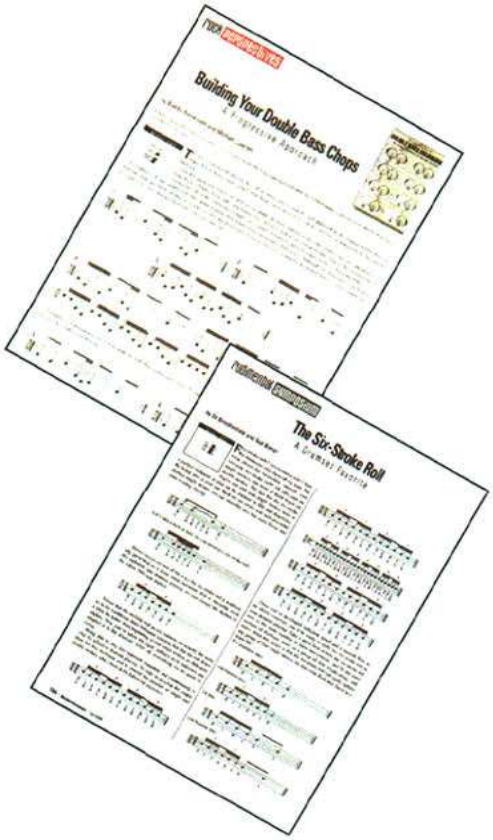

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Inside MEINL

by Rick Van Horn

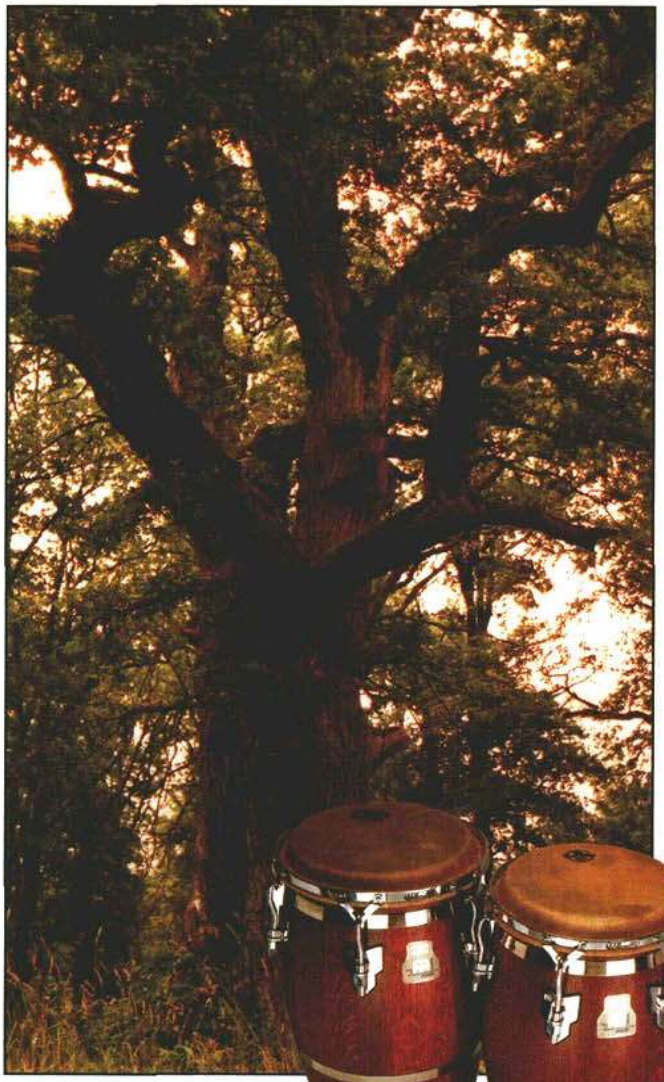
Germany's Roland Meinl Musikinstrumente is a study in contrasts. They manufacture their own products, and they distribute products made by others. Their own line includes instruments that are musically related, but physically very different. They respect the traditions associated with all the instruments they make, but they take a forward-looking approach to making them.

Meinl makes cymbals—among the most ancient of instruments—using high-tech industrial processes and futuristic robotics. New models are created individually by hand, but then a computer records every nuance of that "individual" sound so it can be reproduced en masse. Meinl's top-of-the-line congas and bongos are made according to centuries-old techniques. But many of their other percussion instruments feature cutting-edge designs based on input from today's top players.

Basically, Meinl's philosophy is, "The established ways of doing things are good. Innovative ways of doing things can be better."

Meinl uses cutting-edge technology to turn this...

...into these,



and centuries-old techniques to turn this...

...into these.

From Then To Now

Company president and namesake Roland Meinl began making low-cost cymbals in the 1950s. By 1972, when Roland's son Reinhold joined the business, there were still only six people in the company. Today, there are over a hundred people in the German operation. The company boasts a history of innovations in the cymbal business, but they've also made their share of mistakes. It's an interesting story, which Reinhold Meinl—now vice president and CEO—relates.

"Before cymbals were lacquered," says Reinhold, "my father was the first to put them into plastic bags for protection during shipping. When we started to make bronze cymbals in the early 1970s, he was the first to apply a lacquer coating to protect the cymbals against oxidation. We were the first company to shape a cymbal's bell completely out of the hammering operation. And even before we did that—while we were still pressing bells into the cymbals—we were the first to make models with their bells unfinished. Screen-printing the brand and model name on the cymbal was also my father's idea. Originally we used a metal stamp, but we didn't like it because it required a lot of impact against a finished cymbal. Plastic bags, lacquer coatings, unfinished bells, and screen-printed logos are now common among all cymbal brands.

"Actually, I don't mind that other cymbal companies copy us," says Reinhold with a smile. "I take it as a compliment."

Not all of Meinl's ideas have been successes. In the early 1970s Roland Meinl drilled an additional hole in the bottom cymbal of a pair of hi-hats, to eliminate airlock. But he forgot to include any explanation with the cymbals. "Our customers didn't understand the idea," Reinhold recalls. "They thought the second hole was some kind of manufacturing flaw! So we stopped doing the hole. Another company did it later on—but they drilled more than one hole, so people would understand that it was done intentionally. Our innovation was good, but our marketing wasn't."

Over the ensuing years, marketing and related problems were the greatest impediments to Meinl's growth in the American market. When they released their first professional line, called Profile, in 1984, Bill Berry of REM endorsed it. But Meinl had no artist relations staff in the US. "We had nobody in America to take care of Bill, so we lost him," says Reinhold. "The same thing happened with other artists. We had contact problems simply because of the time difference between the US and Germany. It was not a good system."

Meinl had better luck in 1985, when they introduced their Raker rock cymbals. The heavy metal scene was in full swing, and many US drummers first saw the Meinl name in ads featuring Stefan Kaufman of the German band Accept.

Meinl next introduced Tri-Tone cymbals, designed in conjunction with Billy Cobham. "Frankly, we made a mistake with that line," says Reinhold. "The cymbals were made exactly to Billy's specifications, so they didn't appeal to a wide market. Had we made them as part of the Custom Cymbal Shop series that we have today, there would have been no problem. But at that time we introduced them as a complete production series, and it failed."

The Reference Class series was also unsuccessful, but for a very different reason. Says Reinhold, "Reference Class models were very thin. They were hand-polished, and they looked and sounded very good. But we used Stefan Kaufman in the photo shoot! So people who normally bought Raker cymbals were buying Reference Class cymbals...and breaking them by the dozens! We made the right cymbal, but we advertised it wrong.

"We've made many mistakes," Reinhold concludes, "and we'll probably make new ones that we don't know about yet. But the idea is to learn from them."

And learn they have. In the fifteen years since *MD* first visited the Meinl factory, the company has upgraded its manufacturing operations and has introduced new and innovative cymbal lines. Today Meinl offers three Marathon student lines, the Raker, Lightning, Amun, and Classics professional lines, Candela percussion cymbals, and two series of Custom Cymbal Shop models. They've also opened their own US headquarters in Miami, Florida, so as to be better able to serve the American market. Their endorser roster now includes artists from a variety of styles, including fusion master Marco Minnemann, legendary percussionist Manolo Badrena, funk masters Rick Latham, Clyde Stubblefield, and Jabo Starks, hip-hop specialist Johnny Rabb, and rockers Shane Gaalaas and Mike Terrana.

Make no mistake: Meinl is ready to go head-to-head with the big boys, on their own turf.

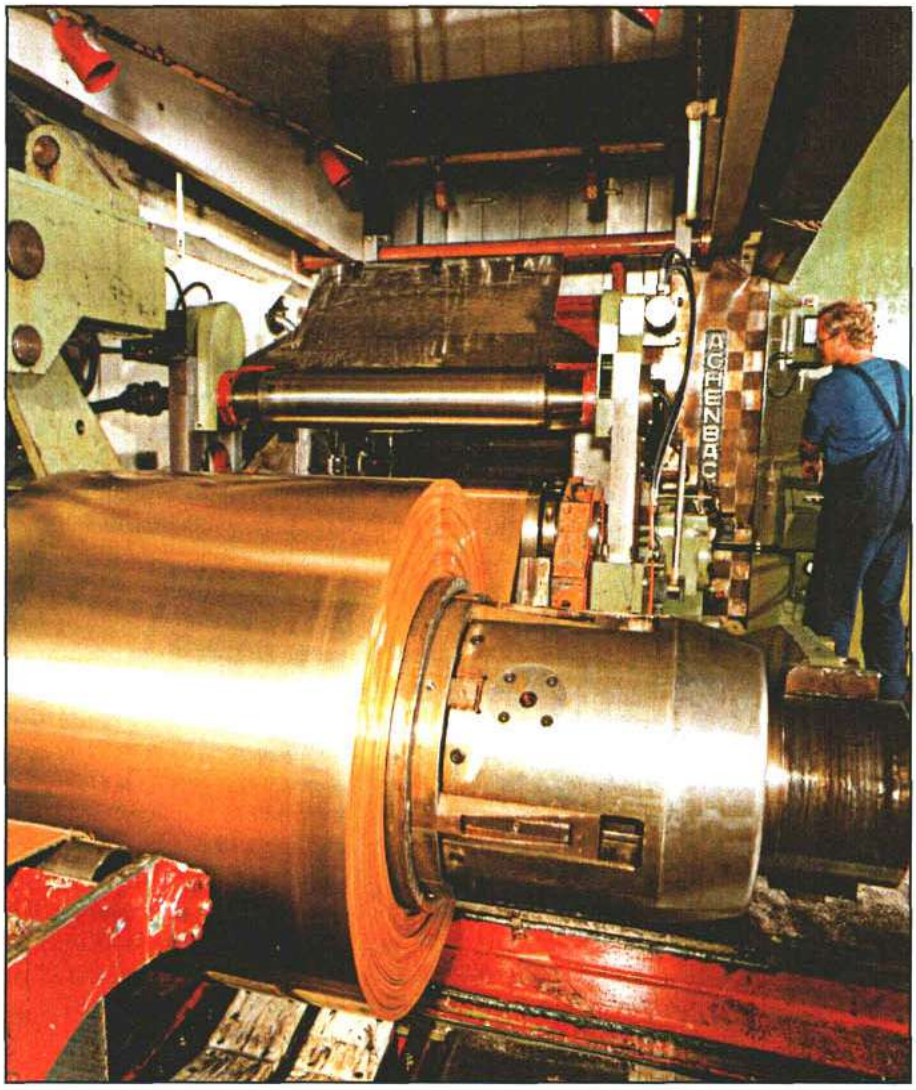
Cymbal Manufacturing

Meinl cymbals start life as fifty-foot-long ingots of red-hot bronze or brass, almost two feet wide and four inches thick. These are created in the sprawling metal-rolling facility of the Wieland company, near the southern German town of Ulm. Within it, enormous machines convert the thick ingots into thin sheets that are hundreds of feet long. Out of these sheets, which are made to Meinl's precise specifications, are cut disks of various sizes. The disks are shipped to the Meinl factory in Neustadt an der Aisch, where they're transformed from industrial raw material into musical instruments.

Once the disks have arrived at the Meinl plant, they're carefully checked for proper thickness, weight, and consistency of temper. Then they're separated according to alloy. Brass, nickel-silver, and some bronze disks will become student cymbals. Most of the bronze disks will be transformed into professional or custom models.

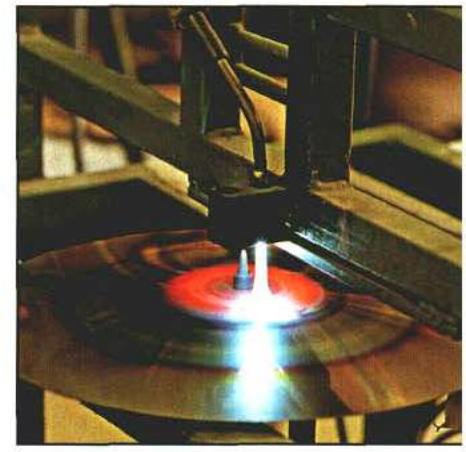
Student models are machine-formed by a unique rolling process. Instead of stamping the cymbals in a traditional press, a wheel is rolled over the flat disk, exerting pressure against a mold below it. This shapes the bell and the profile, and creates the "lathing lines," all at the same time. All that remains is to smooth the edge on a lathe, and then lacquer and label the cymbal. It's a very quick process, allowing the cymbals to be marketed at a low cost. Meinl's entry-level range, called Marathon, offers brass, nickel-silver, and bronze lines. Each offers several different models in order to provide variety, even at the low end.

The bells of professional cymbals are created by a heat-and-pressure process. Each flat disk is spun under an acetylene torch aimed at its center. A thin splash will be heated for six to eight seconds, a thick ride for up to thirty seconds. When sufficiently heated, the disk is put under a



Raw metal ingots are converted into thin sheets hundreds of feet long in the huge Wieland metal-rolling plant. Disks cut from these sheets will be turned into cymbals at the Meinl factory.

Student-model cymbals are shaped by a pressure-rolling operation.



Bells on professional cymbals are formed by heating the center of each disk, then applying thousands of pounds of pressure.

huge press, which shapes the bell under thousands of pounds of pressure. Only the bell is created this way. The overall profile of the cymbal is created entirely by the hammering process.

That hammering is done by ultra-sophisticated robotic arms in three soundproof rooms. The placement, impact strength, and spacing of the hammer beats are all computer-programmed. The hammer itself must be changed manually for different operations, but beyond that the robot does it all.

The shape of each cymbal is created by the hammering, so the hammering pattern is very important. If it started at the bell and simply worked straight out, the result would be a soup bowl instead of a cymbal. Instead, the rows of hammering are done in a very specific order. They may start at the bell, then shift to the middle of the cymbal, work back towards the bell, then go out to the edge. Certain models are hammered strictly on top, some below, some several different times, and some with different sizes and shapes of hammers. Even the flanged edges of China models are created by the hammering process.

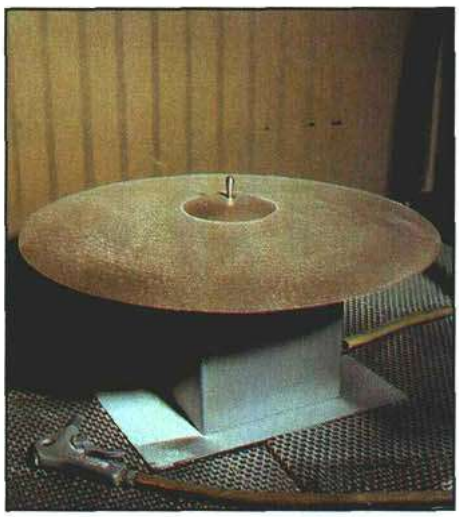
Every cymbal made by the computer has a detailed program that includes the cymbal's model, thickness, hammering, bell shape, and other design aspects. Even what might be perceived as "random" hammering patterns are actually carefully documented programs that can be duplicated precisely by the robot hammering operation.

The combined capabilities of computer control and robotic precision were a major factor behind the introduction of Meinl's Custom Cymbal Shop series a few years ago. That series offers a wildly diverse selection of sonic options, with unerring consistency from model to model. And it all started because Meinl didn't have a "jazz" model.

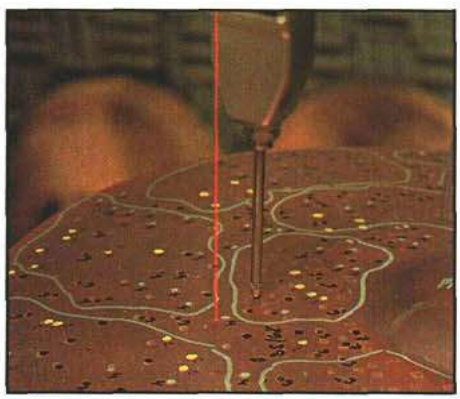
Says Reinhold Meinl, "For many years I thought we couldn't satisfy jazz drummers, because they had so many different opinions. When a drummer came, we could only show him what was in our production lines. If he didn't like them, we couldn't help him. So we stayed away from the jazz market. But since we created the Custom Shop, we can do individual things. Now we don't ask a drummer if he likes one of our existing cymbals. We ask, 'What do you like?' Then we make prototypes within the Custom Shop. If we think

New prototypes for Meinl cymbals are hammered by hand.

Cymbals are carefully lathed by skilled craftsmen.



The Champagne '64 finish on some Custom Cymbal Shop models is the result of a hand-sandblasting operation.



Every nuance of the handmade prototype is laser-scanned into a computer, to be reproduced by the robotic hammering process.

Meinl's hammering robots are capable of re-creating even the most complicated pattern with complete accuracy.

the result is something that other drummers will also like, we put that new model into the line. Now we can cater to jazz and other drummers with widely differing tastes."

That catering has already resulted in many esoteric models within the Custom Cymbal Shop series. Meinl's international artist relations manager, Norbert Saemann, states, "If we placed every Custom Cymbal Shop model next to each other, they'd stretch over 400 meters." This abundant variety is carefully documented so that Meinl can reproduce each model precisely (and customers can easily identify a favorite model). A six-digit number inside the bell of each cymbal defines the model according to size, finish, weight, and other factors.

Custom Cymbal Shop models start out as a single prototype, created by a highly skilled cymbalsmith. But from there on, science takes over. A laser sensor "reads" the cymbal, feeding the computer the exact position, depth, and angle of each hammer strike, as well as the actual sequence of the hammering marks. Based on that information, the robot makes new prototypes. Each prototype is evaluated, and adjustments are made in the programming. As these steps are done, the computer records the changes.

Says Norbert Saemann, "The process may create four or five prototypes that aren't good. We may decide to go back to step three, and start from there with some new hammering technique. Or we may come up with three different prototypes that are *all* good. One may be a little higher in pitch, or a little darker. At that point we have our testers take them home and play them on their drums.

"Eventually we decide that we like the number-two prototype the best. At that point there is no other cymbal in the world like that cymbal. It's definitely a custom creation. But since all the steps used to create it were done via robotics and documented on computer, we can recreate that individual cymbal as many times as we like. That's how we can offer unique Custom Cymbal Shop models that are consistent from cymbal to cymbal."

After the robotic hammering is completed, every cymbal is compared to the master for that model. The bells of the cymbals are cleaned and smoothed, and the edges are tested on a steel plate, to make sure they're flat and true. Any necessary adjustments are made by hand.

In addition to regular and brilliant finishes, Custom Cymbal Shop cymbals are offered in a unique finish called Champagne '64. It's a satiny smooth, unlathed finish that gives the cymbals a slightly dry sound. The finish is created by literally sandblasting each cymbal individually. There are no mechanical aids in this process; only the skill of the operator ensures that each cymbal will have a uniform appearance.

The exception to all of the above is a sub-series of the Custom Cymbal Shop range called One Of A Kind. These cymbals are made completely by hand. As a result, no two are ever alike. While this

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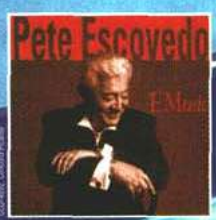

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Inside Meinl

seems contrary to everything else Meinl does, they recognize that some drummers desire such individuality.

"The whole concept of the One Of A Kind line is to come up with original ideas," says Norbert Saemann. "Our craftsman experiments with cymbal sounds constantly. His workspace is cluttered with weird stuff that he's made. For example, he recently came up with an idea that involved two 12" top hi-hat cymbals—one standard and one with a rippled edge—piggybacked together, then matched with a bottom cymbal with jingles underneath, to be used as a hi-hat. That's definitely a unique sound."

When new models are being developed, the Meinl cymbalmakers employ a unique method of acoustic testing. After being hammered, the prototypes are carefully heated with an acetylene torch. The heat tempers the metal, creating the same acoustic effect as if the cymbal had been lathed and finished. This allows Meinl to hear what a finished cymbal will sound like without actually having to go through all of the finishing steps. "It's a useful but tricky process," says Norbert, "because it can only be done once, and only at this point in the production process. If the cymbal was lathed and then heated, it would sound horrible."

All completed Meinl cymbals have their logos applied by a silk-screening process, after which they're lacquered. Most of the lines are sprayed, but Custom Cymbal Shop models are lacquered by hand, using a cloth dipped in a special formula that can only be made up in small batches at a time. The application is exceptionally thin, which Meinl believes gives the cymbals a unique sound. The lacquered cymbals are placed in an oven briefly to dry. Then they're ready for shipping.

Along with their experimentation into new sounds in the Custom Cymbal Shop series, Meinl has been reexamining and improving some of their older lines as well. Says Reinhold Meinl, "In the past few years a number of drummers have contacted us to say they want the Profile line back. So we're considering reintroducing that line. Also, it seems that hard rock music is coming back from many directions. Our Raker cymbals are perfect for that style, and sales are picking up.

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But the original Rakers could have a sort of gongy, high overtone. We're now using a new hammering technique to eliminate that characteristic and improve their musicality. Even within a long-running, established line, we're always looking for ways to improve our cymbals."

Two of Meinl's professional lines—the Amun and Classics series—use Egyptian symbols as their logos. Why does a German manufacturer use so much Egyptian imagery? Reinhold replies: "The man who created that idea is a drummer with a talent for promotional campaigns. He told us that bronze technology came about in Egypt thousands of years ago. After we had verified that fact, we thought it would be a good idea to promote it, because many other cymbal companies have built up legends about Turkey. Turkey is not the origin of bronze, Egypt is.

"Six months after we introduced the Classics with their Egyptian theme, another manufacturer came out with a similar line to compete with them. Their cymbals had three pyramids on them, and their catalog even showed the cymbals set into sand! We had a good laugh over that."

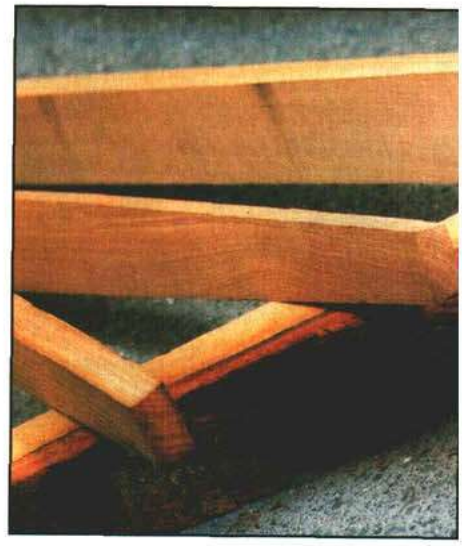
Meinl Percussion

Meinl is the only company in the world that makes cymbals *and* a full line of percussion instruments. Like most major manufacturers, Meinl makes the bulk of its percussion line in Thailand—due mainly to the availability of Asian woods and inexpensive skilled labor. However, *unlike* any other manufacturer, Meinl also offers congas and bongos handcrafted in Germany. They're made for Meinl by Fassfabrik Müller, a small woodworking factory that's been operated by the same family for generations.

Two series of drums are made in that factory. One is the Collection series, which offers congas of wild cherry and elm, and bongos of cherry, elm, beech, sycamore maple, moor oak, and walnut. The other is the Woodcraft series. Its congas and bongos—made of 100-year-old German oak—represent the top of the line.

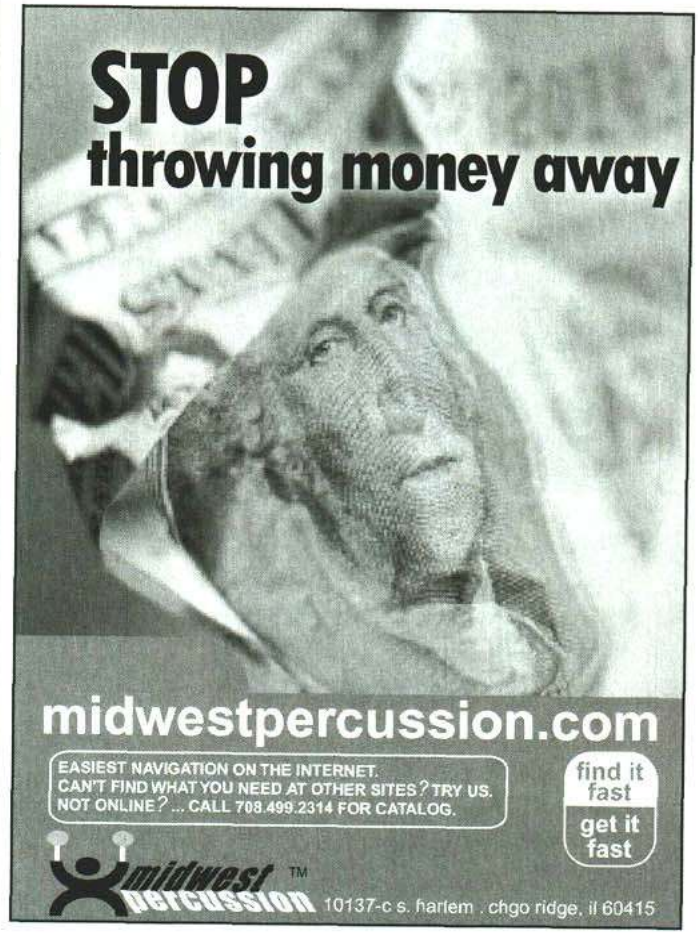
Woodcraft Manufacturing

The first step in the manufacture of Woodcraft congas and bongos is the selection of slow-growth trees, chosen for their strength and density. These are cut into the staves that will eventually be formed into the finished drums. The cut staves are allowed to air-cure for two years so that moisture can escape naturally.



Planks are cut from slow-growth German oak trees, then shaped into the staves that will be joined to make a conga shell.

When the staves are ready, a curve is milled onto the face of each one. This creates the circular shape of the drum when all the staves are glued together. The



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The staves are carefully fit into circular steel rings.

The staves are boiled in water to soften them, so that they may be bent into the contour of a finished drum.

staves are cut to exact length, then tapered so that they're wider at the top and narrower at the bottom. This taper allows them to be bent into the contour of a conga. The staves are inspected at every milling step. Any imperfection, like a tiny worm hole or disfigured grain, will cause the stave to be discarded.

To create a conga drum, twenty-one staves are fit into metal rings that hold them in a circular shape. Then they're boiled in a vat of water for fifteen minutes to soften the wood. The softened staves are placed under a large hydraulic press, which pushes down on the metal rings and bends the staves to a point where a smaller ring can be fit around their bottoms. This secures them into a "conga" shape. On a good day, forty shells might be formed, inspected, and passed forward for finishing.

The press used to shape the staves was originally used to make barrels, in a technology that is now outmoded. Says Norbert Saemann, "Our woodworking company actually fabricated their press from bits and pieces of machinery found elsewhere. It's at least sixty years old. But it's the perfect way to get the precision needed to form the conga staves to create a 'classic'-style instrument."

The bent staves remain within their metal forming rings for the next two days, which they spend in a special drying room. After that the rings can be removed, and the staves will retain their bent shape.

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A sixty-year-old barrelmaking press is used to force the softened staves into their proper shape.

After drying for two days, the staves are glued together.

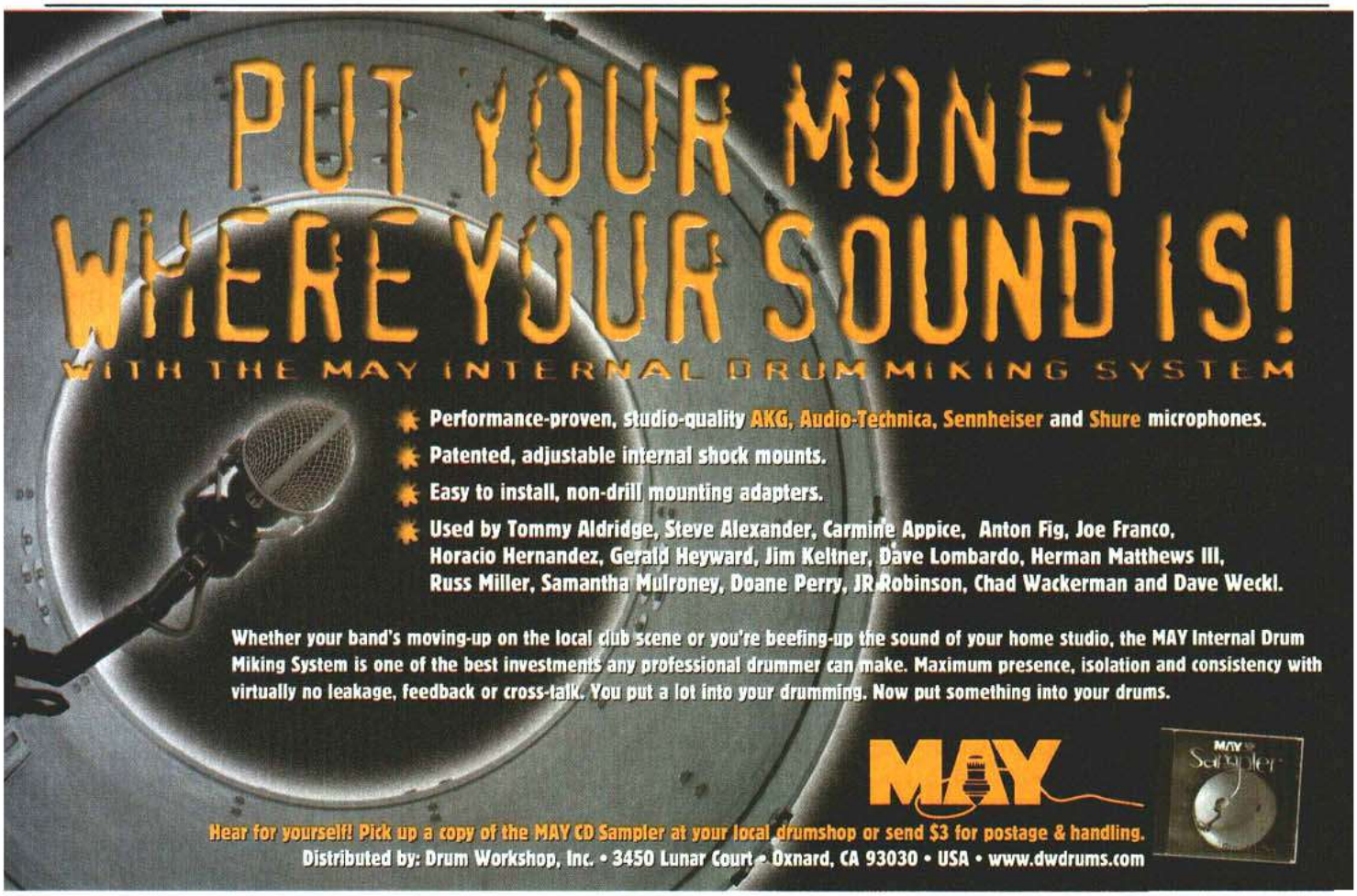
At that point, glue is applied to each stave, and the rings are re-installed. The assemblies are put back in the drying room for several hours to cure the glue. When this is done, the shell is formed and ready for finishing.

Each drum is cut to proper length on a milling machine that also trues the top and bottom edges. Then the inner and outer surfaces of the shell are smoothed and sanded, after which they're stained and lacquered. The polished metal rings are installed and taped over, and the drum is lacquered a second time. Says Norbert, "We apply that first coat of lacquer under the rings to help seal and protect the wood."

The holes for the tuning lugs are drilled by hand through a crown-like steel template. Then the drum receives all its hardware, including brackets, lugs, the rim, the logo plate, and the head.

Bongo shells are made by all the same processes, except that their staves are not bent. Instead, the staves are shaped completely by the milling process. Rather than being flat, their edges are cut in a "toothed" configuration, creating more surface area for the glue. This is important because the curvature of a bongo is more severe than that of a conga, which puts more stress on the shell.

Each bongo shell is contoured to be thick at the top, where the head is attached, then much thinner in the center of the body, and then thicker again at the bottom. This is more than just a cosmetic device to make the bongos look attractive. Meinl calls this design "resonance



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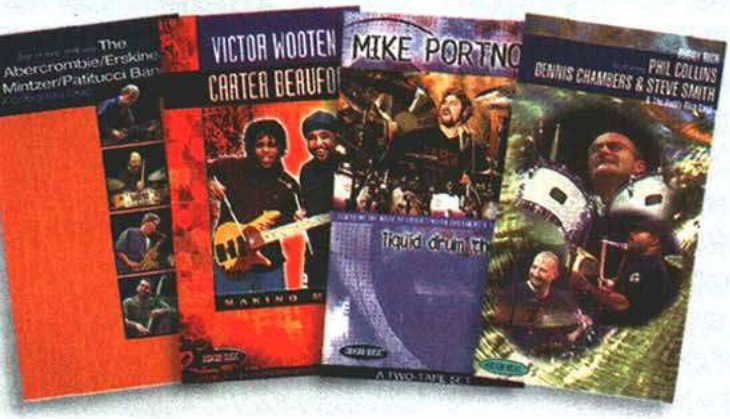

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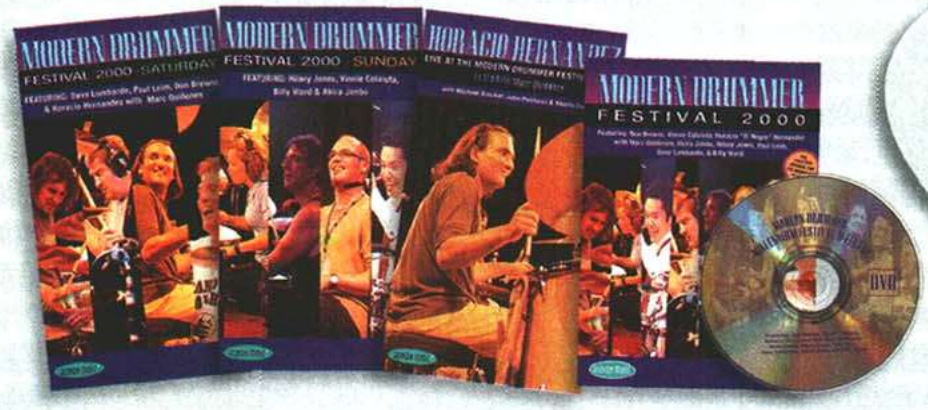

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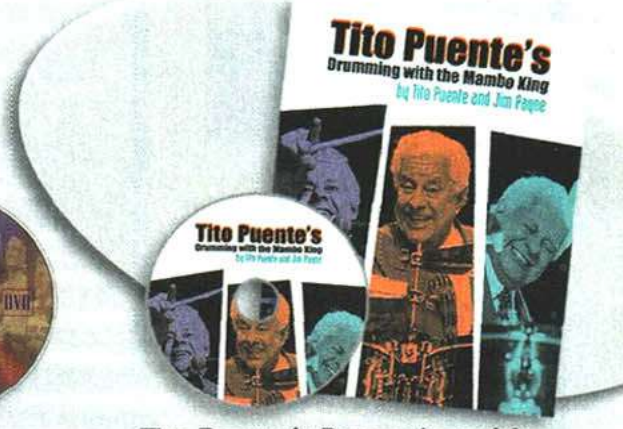

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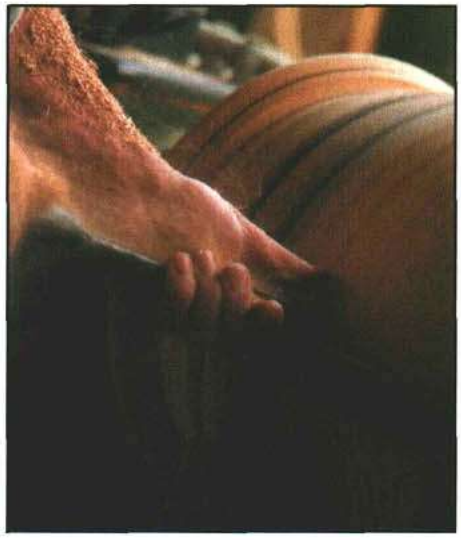

The glued shell is shaped and smoothed on a lathe. Following this step, the shell will be sanded, then lacquered.

Hardware is assembled to each finished shell by hand.

shaping, claiming that it provides greater resonance and projection, as well as a brighter sound.

There's a certain irony in the fact that a Woodcraft conga is first cousin to a German wine barrel, while a bongo is only one step removed from a beer stein. "It's true," laughs Norbert Saemann. "The craftsmen out in the shop know very little about drums. They don't know about the Latin influence on music today. They just know what job they have to do, and how to do it exceedingly well—to the point where it's really an art. They don't know how special what they make is. They don't know that it will be seen onstage with Phil Collins on Super Bowl Sunday. A barrel certainly never will!"

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INTERCHANGEABLE CAMS
From radically aggressive to full finesse, and every nuance in between, one push of a button replaces the cam and totally changes the pedal's performance to suit your needs. Each pedal includes all 4 cams.

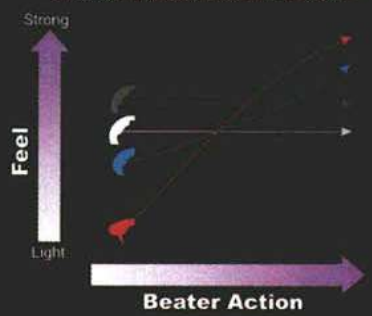
The Black Cam is Pearl's original Linear Action Cam. It offers great power and a very natural, well balanced, smooth continuous feel.

The White Cam is an Oversized Linear design also offering great power and balance, but with a slightly lighter feel and smoothness.

The Blue Cam is a very popular Off-Axis Progressive design. It starts with a light feel, but "accelerates" with greater speed and power upon impact with the head.

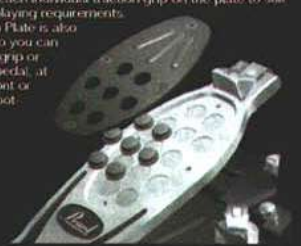
The Red Cam is the Radical Progressive. It's extreme off axis design offers great response to sensitive footwork, and the most radical force possible upon head impact.

Check the chart below to get a better idea of the action and feel of each of Eliminator's four cams.



Find your favorite cam, and then use Eliminator's "PowerShifter" movable footboard function to further fine tune the power and speed of the pedal.

TRACTION PLATE FOOTBOARD
This new concept in footboard design lets you remove and reconfigure each individual traction grip on the plate to suit your exact playing requirements. The Traction Plate is also reversible, so you can position the grip on either side of the pedal, at either the front or rear of the footboard.



Other great features include:
QuadBeater—4 different beater surfaces on one beater
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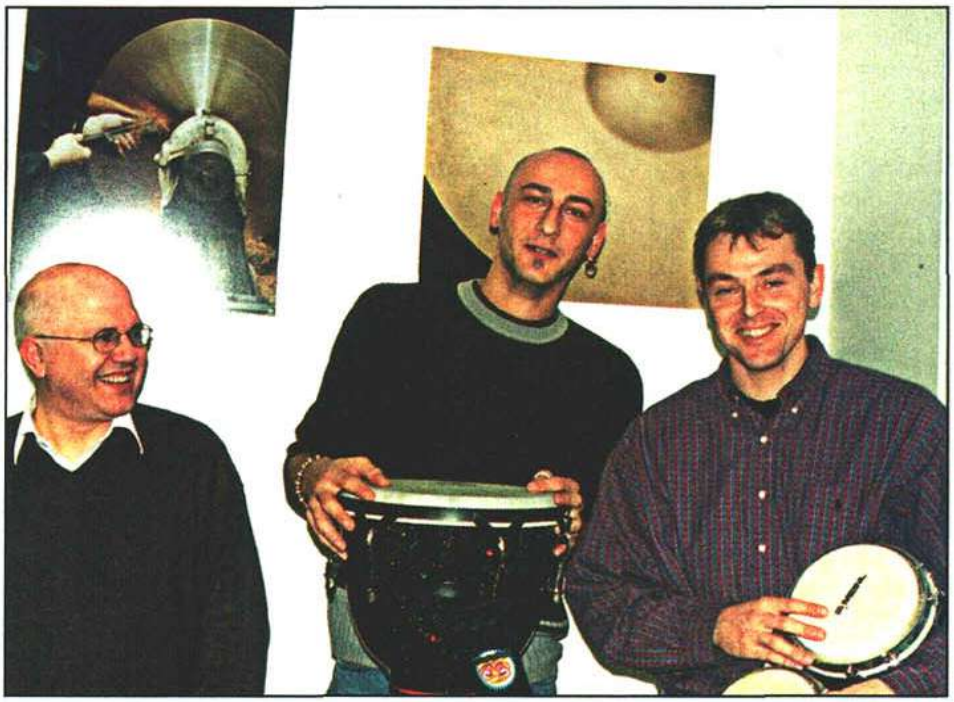
Inside Meinl



Representing the only company that makes cymbals and percussion instruments are (from left): vice president and CEO Reinhold Meinl, international artist relations manager Norbert Saemann, and international sales and marketing manager Udo Heubeck.

Meinl puts as much effort into the generation of new and innovative ideas as they do into the handcrafting of Woodcraft congas and bongos. Says international sales and marketing manager Udo Heubeck, "We want to offer things that are desired by the market, but that are also different from what's already out there. So we spoke to a lot of congueros about how the instrument sounds. What do we need to offer? They said, How about drums with a purer sound, with no hole in the shell? That led to the development of our patented Floatune tuning system. There is no hole in the shell; the hardware runs from the top to the bottom of the drum.

"Another good example is our djembes," Udo continues. "At one point, every percussion company offered a wood djembe. But we did some market research and realized that we needed both fiberglass and wood drums, for different sounds. Then we saw that if you're playing the drum between your knees, you can have problems with the lugs cutting into your legs. So we repositioned the lugs and added some rubber for greater playing comfort. Also, a lot of women are playing djembes these days. And because they're very image-conscious, we offer many different colors. By making all these changes we actually redesigned an existing instrument."

When it came to designing their top-quality timbales, Meinl took advantage of endorser Luis Conte's experience. Says Udo Heubeck, "Luis came up with some very good ideas, and the result is our Luis Conte Signature Timbales. They're offered with hand-hammered brass or steel shells, with a bottom edge that's rolled to the outside. It's an old-fashioned design that's not easy to make. We also repositioned the lugs to make playing cascara on the side of the shell easier. We put a smaller lug on that side to create more shell area. Again, it's a traditional instrument with a complete redesign, and it earned us the Music International Press Award at the 2000 Frankfurt Music Messe as the most impressive percussion instrument of the year."

Another Meinl innovation is their Free Ride bongos. They feature shells with the Resonance Shaping Area described earlier, along with a special connection system. "A fixed connection between the two bongo shells changes the sound," says Udo. "So we designed a connection that's

flexible, with no screws or blocks of wood touching the shells. The sound is more open."

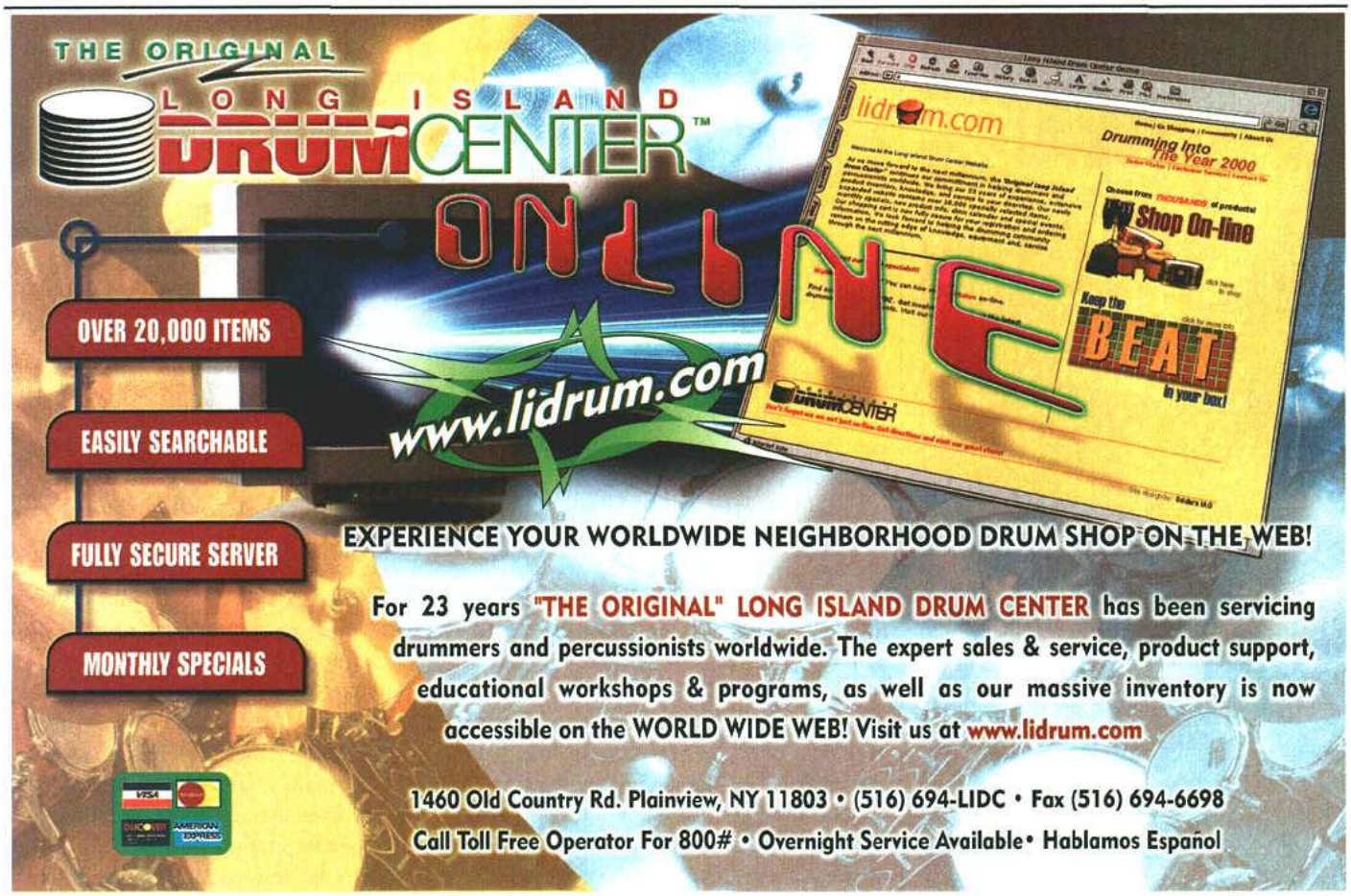
Because Meinl makes percussion instruments and cymbals, it's logical that they'd offer a cymbal line for percussionists. "Percussion players are very cautious about hitting cymbals that might injure their hands," says Udo. "So we had to make cymbals that could be played by hand—or sometimes with a timbale stick—to produce the best possible sound. The result was our Candela series. It's already the most extensive percussion-oriented cymbal range in existence, but we plan to expand it with new exotic sounds, which percussion players are always looking for.

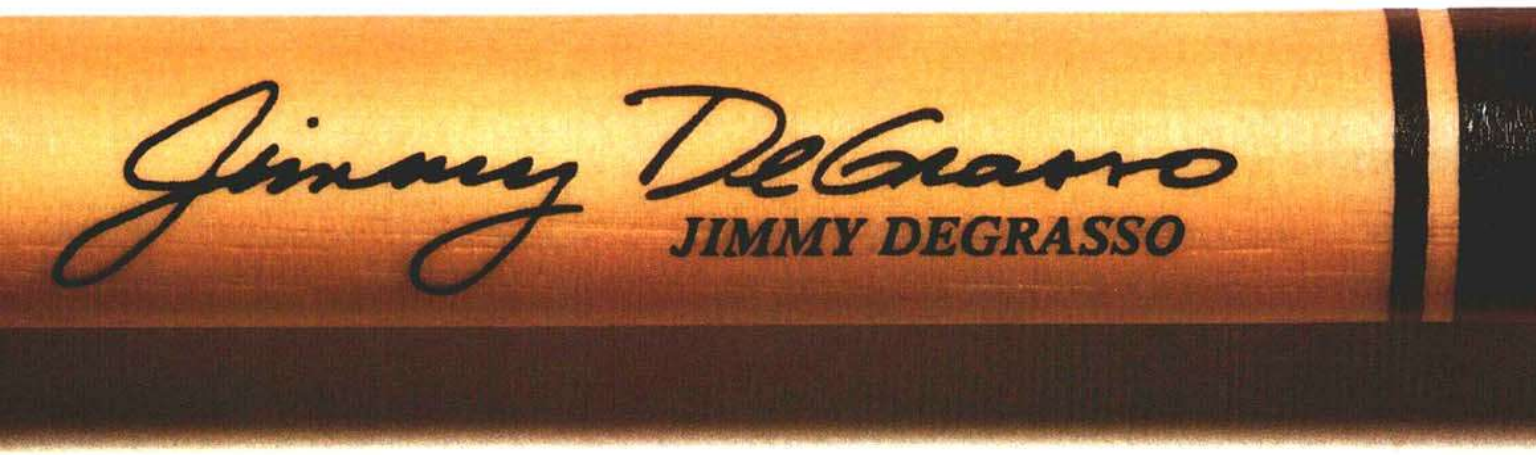
"Of course, everybody makes cowbells," Udo continues. "But we invested a lot of time into coming up with new ideas for ours. We're now the only company offering hand-hammered cowbells—our Steelbells—and they've been very well accepted. Also, samba and salsa music require bells of specific acoustic colors and sizes. So we designed a chrome-finished cowbell range at the same price as the Steelbell range—specifically for what samba and salsa musicians are looking for. And last year we introduced handheld cowbells and cowbell shakers."

Reinhold Meinl adds, "As you can see, we don't add instruments that are just different colors or sizes. We actually create things. Along with the items already mentioned, we have a patent on the design of our conga and bongo stands. We also invented mini-bongos, congas, and djembes. Many other companies offer them now, but we were the first. That's the most important selling point for a company nowadays: Innovate, don't imitate. And, by doing so, make life easier for musicians."

In addition to their Meinl (professional) and Marathon (student) percussion series, Meinl also manufactures two independent brands of percussion instruments. The first is called Headliner. Says Udo Heubeck, "The Headliner range lends itself very well to the recreational percussion market, with its low price, fun colors, and good sound. It's the perfect niche for that."

The second independent percussion brand made by Meinl is the Nino line, which offers instruments specifically for children. Says Udo, "Nino products are far more than mini versions of Meinl-brand gear. It's a totally different way of making the instruments. We not only must achieve a certain level of musical quality, we also have to meet toy-grade safety standards for small children, which are very stringent. But we're willing to meet those standards, because we consider it an investment in our own future. If kids learn to play hand drums now, they'll want to continue to play them as they grow, and perhaps become professional. That's when they'll become buyers of Meinl full-sized instruments. Maybe we'll be able to draw them away from their computers and video games."





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and add 60,000 lighters.

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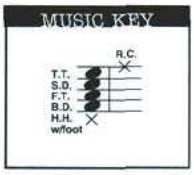
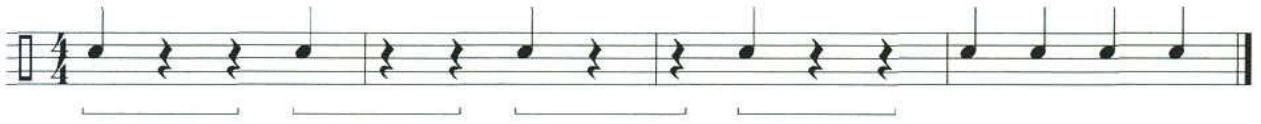
Phrasing 4/4 Drum Breaks In "3"

by Ken Vogel

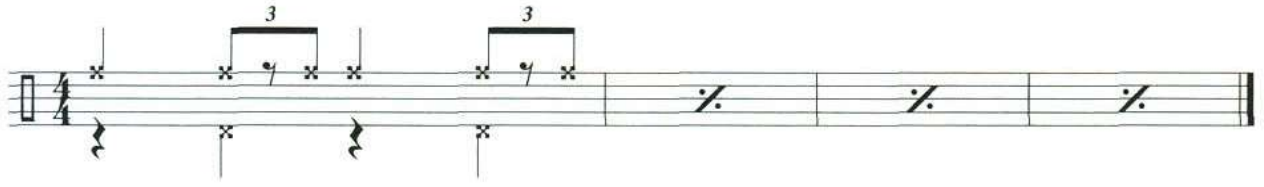


A creative approach to take when playing four-bar solos in 4/4 time is to phrase part of the solo in groups of three. This is by no means a new concept. Jazz drummers Max Roach, Roy Haynes, and many others have been utilizing this concept for years.

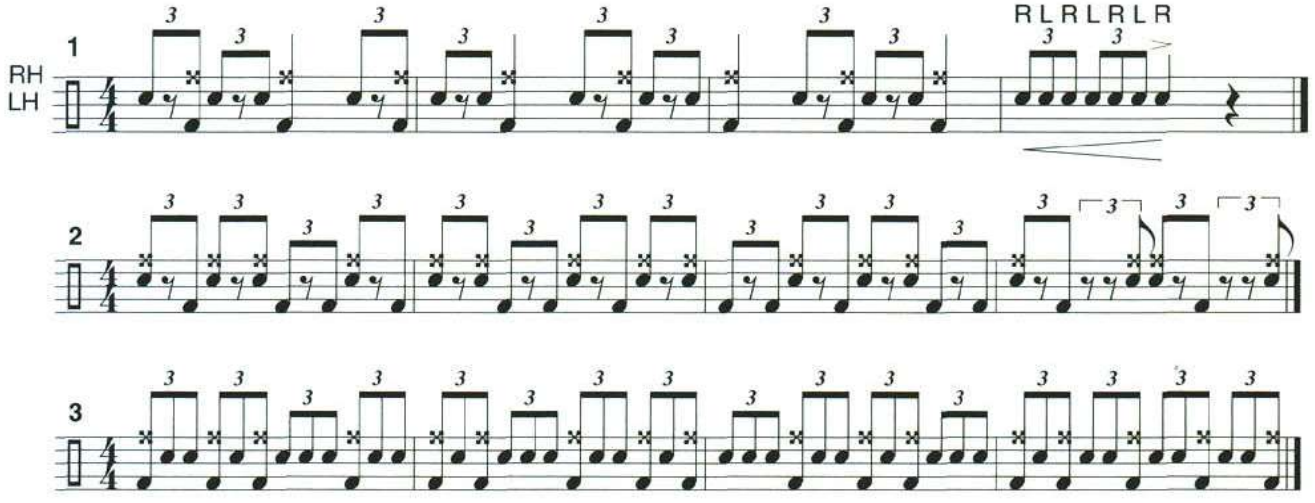
The four-bar drum break in 4/4 time consists of sixteen beats. The first three measures in the following four-measure solos are grouped in three-beat phrases. The brackets indicate the three-beat phrases in the example below.



Precede each four-measure solo with four measures of "jazz time." "Time" may be played with the bass drum on 1-2-3-4, or without the bass drum.

Time Pattern

Experiment with different hi-hat variations.

1. Close the hi-hat on beats 2 and 4 throughout.
2. Close the hi-hat on beats 1-2-3-4.
3. Play the solos minus the hi-hat.
4. Close the hi-hat where you wish.



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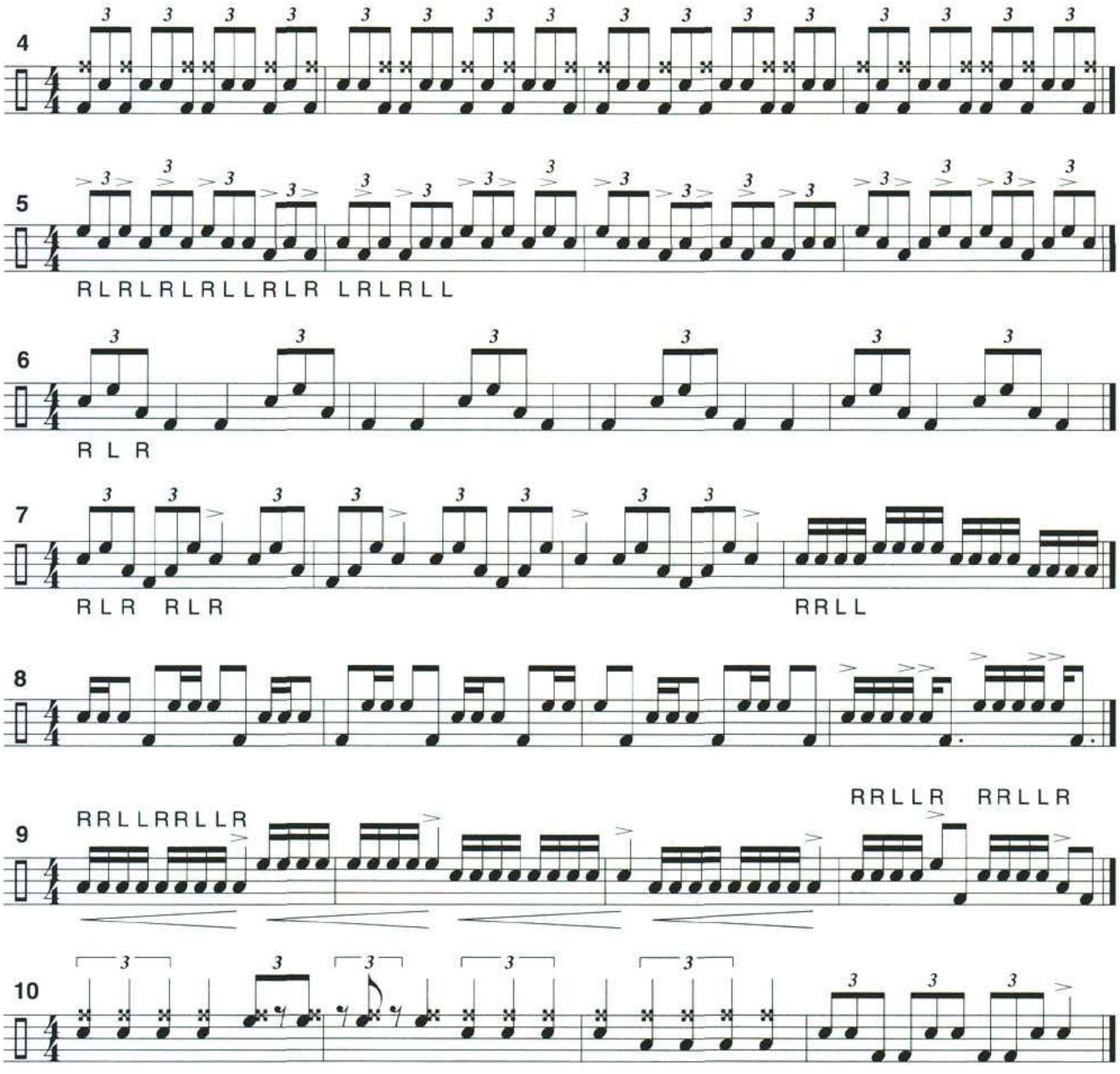
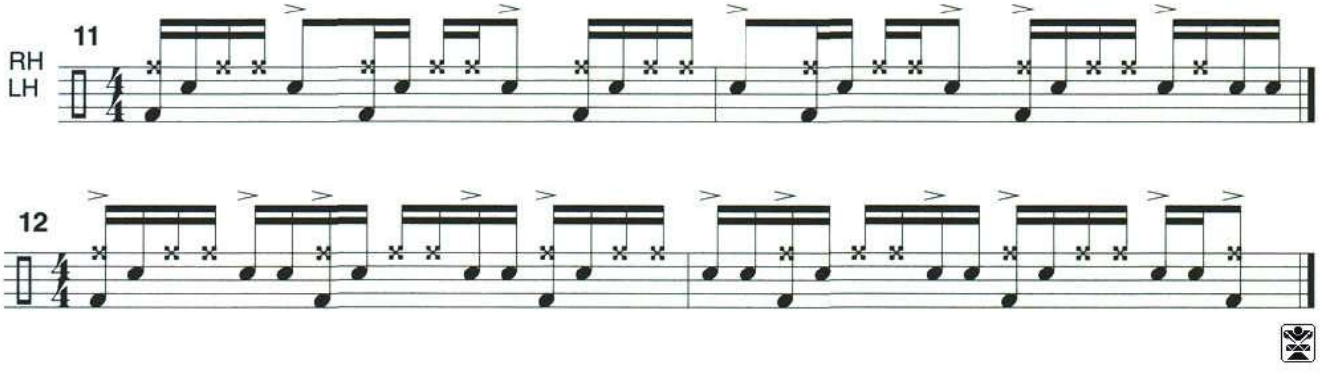

The last two exercises use phrasings in 3/8. Set up these breaks by preceding each with two measures of "rock time."



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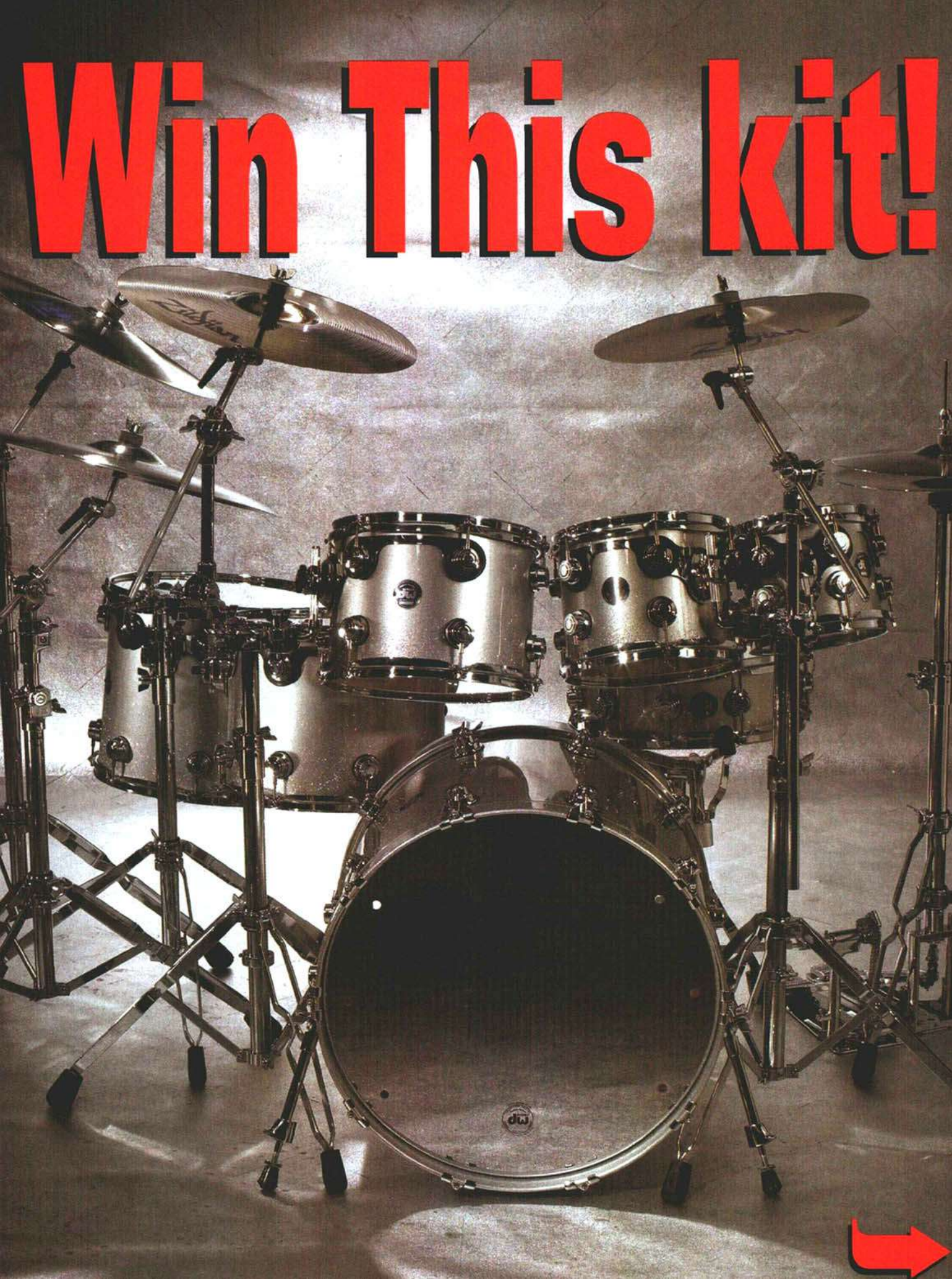

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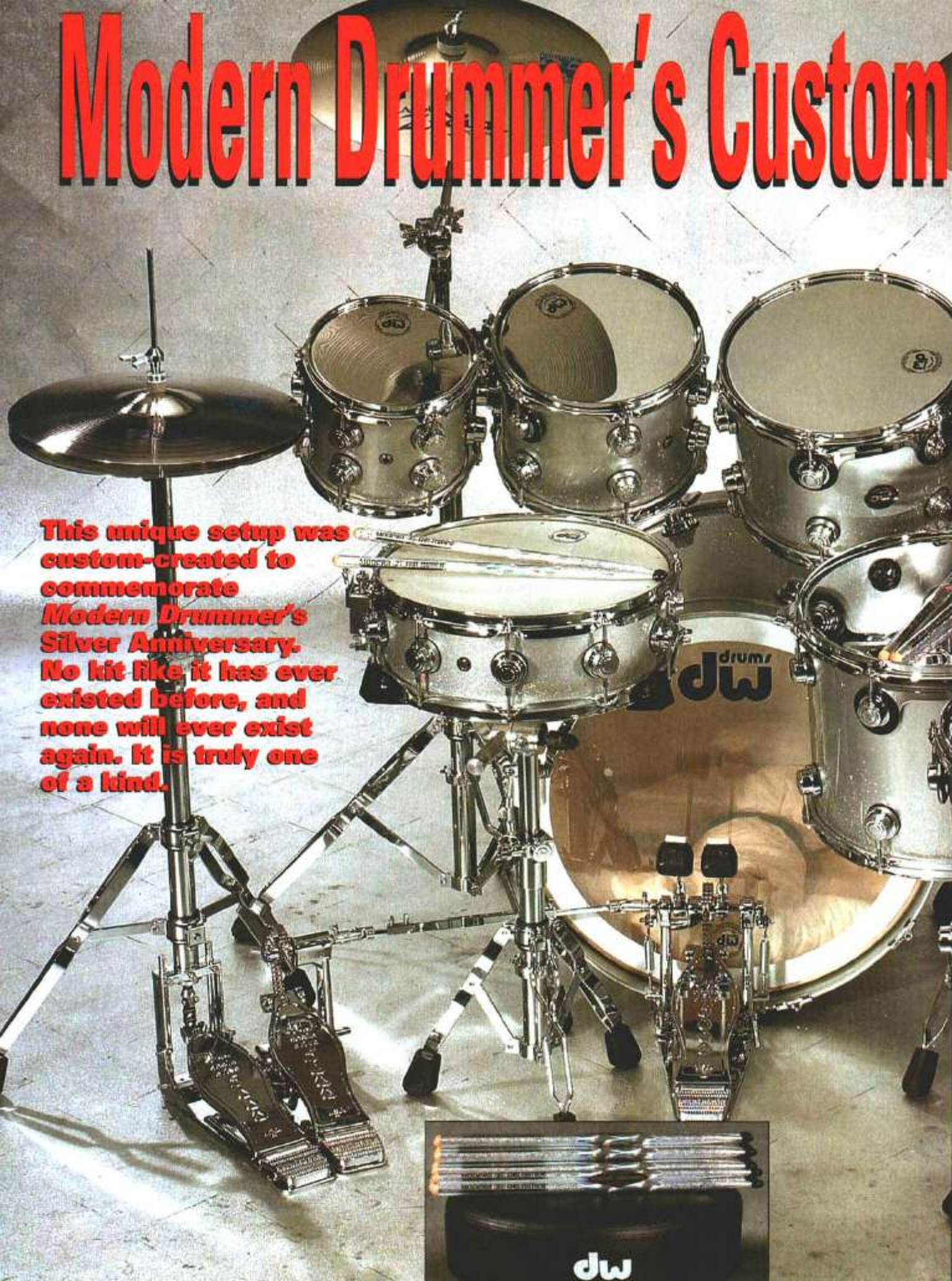

This unique setup was custom-created to commemorate *Modern Drummer*'s Silver Anniversary. No kit like it has ever existed before, and none will ever exist again. It is truly one of a kind.

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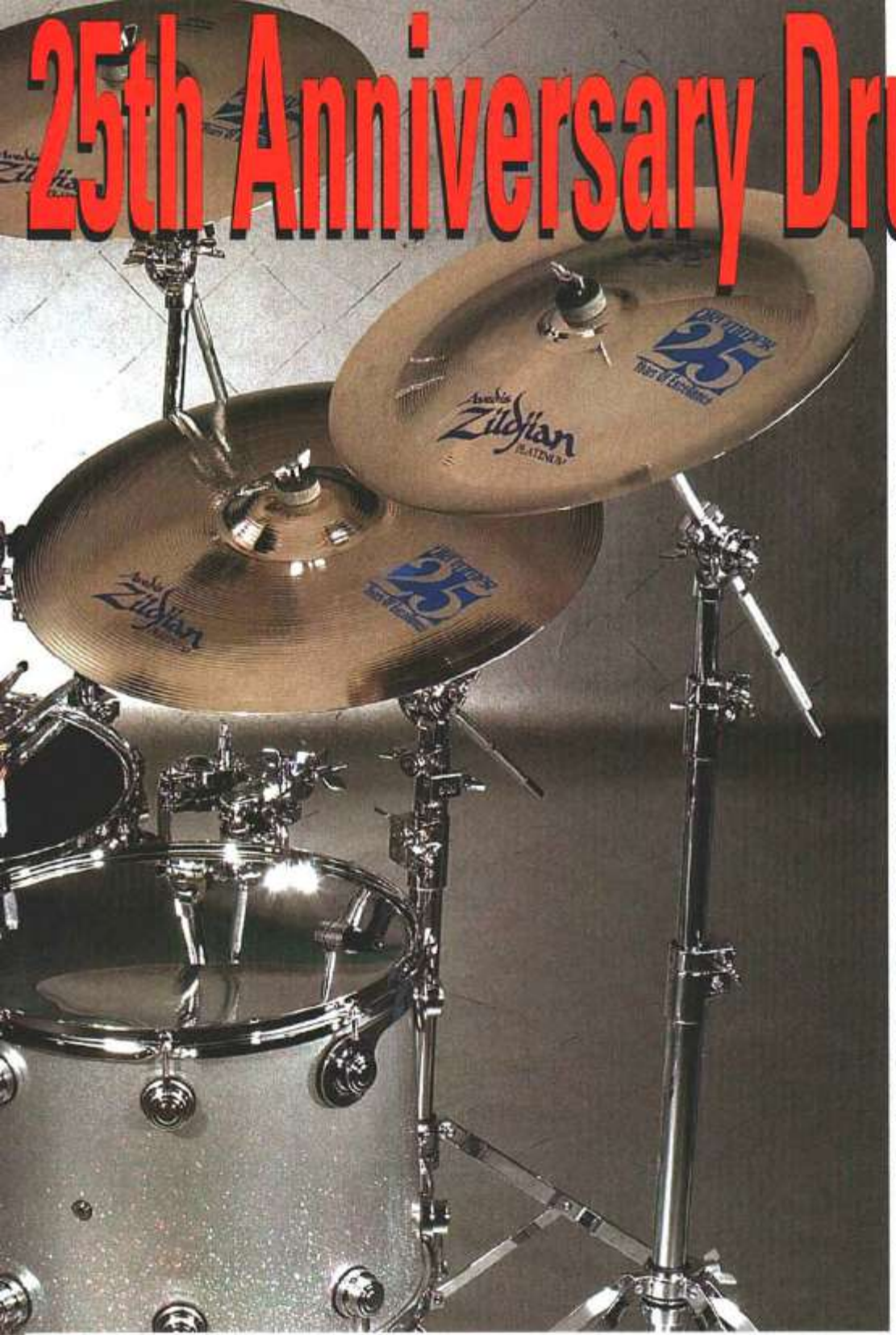

This fabulous prize includes:

From Drum Workshop: A Collectors Series drumkit, finished in a special silver/iridescent sparkle fade finish specially commissioned by *Modern Drummer*. Drums include a 16x22 bass drum, 7x8, 8x10, 9x12, 11x14, and 13x16 toms, and a 5x14 snare drum. Each drum carries a serial number stamped with the prefix "MD," identifying it as part of the *MD* 25th Anniversary drumkit.

Hardware includes a Delta 5002 double bass drum pedal and a Delta 5500TD hi-hat (each custom chrome-plated), a 9300 snare stand, a 9999 tom/cymbal stand, two 9934 double-tom/cymbal stands, two 9700 straight cymbal stands, and a 9100 drum stool. Also included are selected DW coated and coated/clear drumheads.

From Zildjian: One of the last remaining sets of A Ziljdian Platinum series cymbals, taken directly from Zildjan's archive collection. Stamped with the *MD* 25th Anniversary logo in blue to match the original printing on the cymbals, these shimmering instruments are already collectors' items! The set consists of a 20" Rock ride, 16" and 18" Rock crashes, an 18" China Boy High, and a pair of14" Rock hi-hats.

From Remo: A complete set of mirror-finish drumheads to fit all the toms and the bass drum. These reflective heads add a gleam and sparkle to every beat!

From Hot Sticks: Twenty-four pairs of Macrolus 5B drumsticks. Each stick is foil-wrapped in a silver sparkle finish to match the drumkit, and features a customized version of the *Modern Drummer* 25th Anniversary logo!

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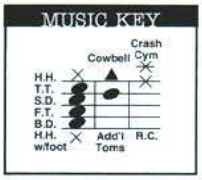
1. Two ways to enter: (a) call (900) 786-3786. Cost: 99¢ per call. You must call from the number where you wish to be notified. Or (b) send a 3.5" x 5.5" or 4" x 6" postcard with your name, address, and telephone number to: Modern Drummer/MD's 25th Anniversary Contest, 12 Old Bridge Rd., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. 2. Enter as often as you wish, but each entry must be phoned or mailed separately. 3. ODDS OF WINNING EACH PRIZE DEPEND ON THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE ENTRIES RECEIVED. 4. CONTEST BEGINS 12/1/00 AND ENDS 2/28/01. PHONE CALLS WILL BE ACCEPTED UNTIL 11:59 PM EDT 2/28/01. POSTCARDS MUST BE POSTMARKED BY 2/28/01 AND RECEIVED BY 3/5/01. 5. Winners will be selected by random drawing on March 12, 2001 and notified by phone on or about March 13, 2001. 6. Employees and their immediate families of Modern Drummer, Drum Workshop, Zildjian, Remo, Hot Sticks, and their affiliates are ineligible. 7. Sponsor is not responsible for lost, misdirected, and/or delayed entries. 8. Open to the residents of US and Canada (except in Florida and the Province of Quebec), 12 years of age or older, provided that CALLERS UNDER THE AGE OF 18 OBTAIN PARENTAL OR GUARDIAN PERMISSION TO ENTER. California residents under 18 may not participate. Residents of MN, GA, LA, NJ, and Canada may enter by mail only. Void where prohibited by law. 9. One prize awarded per household per contest. 10. Grand Prize: From Drum Workshop: a Collectors Series drumkit in custom silver sparkle/iridescent sparkle fade finish, including a 16x22 bass drum, a 5x14 snare drum, 7x8, 8x10, 9x12, 11x14, and 13x16 toms, one (1) custom chrome-plated 5002 double bass drum pedal, one (1) custom chrome-plated 5500TD hi-hat, one (1) 9300 snare stand, one (1) 9999 tom/cymbal stand, two (2) 9934 double-tom/cymbal stands, two (2) 9700 straight cymbal stands, one (1) 9100 drum stool, and selected DW clear and coated/clear drumheads. From Zildjian: One (1) set of A Zildjian Platinum finish cymbals, including a 20" Rock ride, one (1) 18" Rock crash, one (1) 16" Rock crash, one 18" China Boy High, and one (1) pair 14" Rock hi-hats. From Remo: One (1) set of mirror-finish drumheads to fit supplied drums. From Hot Sticks: Twenty-four (24) pairs of Macrolus 5B drumsticks in custom silver-sparkle finish. Suggested retail value: $13,504. 14. Sponsored by Modern Drummer Publications, Inc., 12 Old Bridge Rd., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009, (973) 239-4140. 14. This game subject to the complete Official Rules. For a copy of the complete Official Rules or a winners list, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Modern Drummer Publications/MD's 25th Anniversary Contest/Official

Creating A Drumming Vocabulary, Part 2

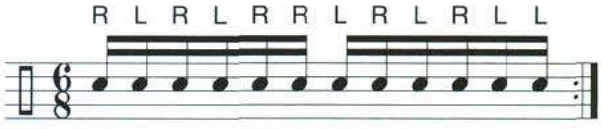
Rudiments And The 6/8 Afro-Cuban Beat

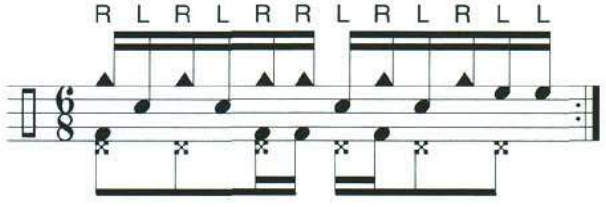
by Rob Leytham

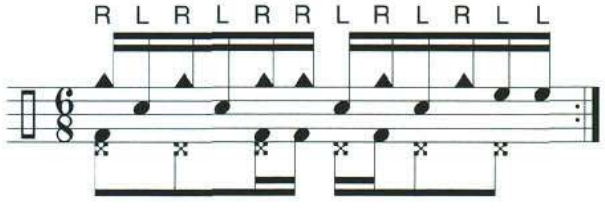


This month we'll learn an Afro-Cuban beat along with double paradiddles, nine-stroke rolls, and thirteen-stroke rolls played on the drumset.

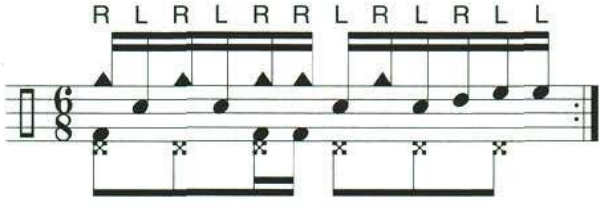
To create our 6/8 Afro-Cuban beat, we must first learn the double paradiddle. Count it as 16th notes in 6/8 time (1-&-2-&-3-&-4-&-5-&-6-&).

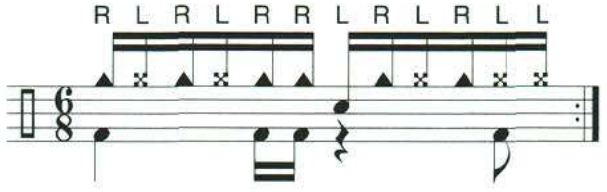
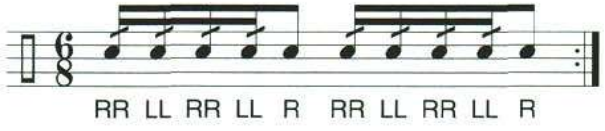
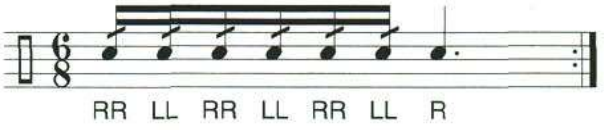
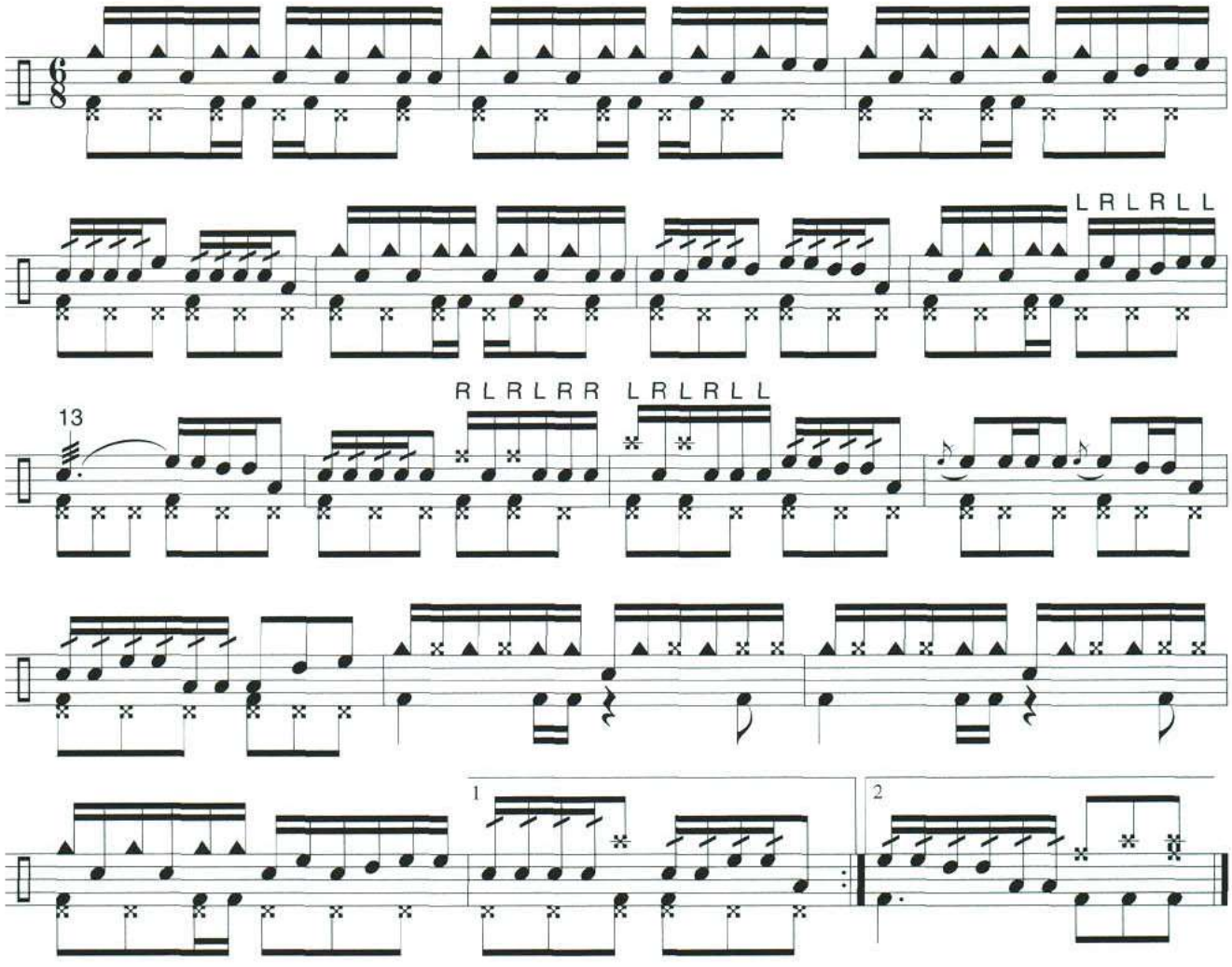


After you re comfortable with the sticking, put the right hand on the cowbell and the left on the snare. If you don't have a cowbell, the bell of the ride cymbal will work. The bass drum plays on beats 1, 3 "&," the "&" after 4, and 6, while the 8th notes are played on the hi-hat with the foot.

The next example has the left stick playing the high tom on 6 "&." Notice the change in the bass drum part.



Here, the right hand plays a tom-tom on the "&" of beat 5. The bass drum plays on beats 1 and 3 "&."

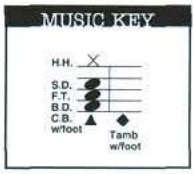


Here, the left hand plays the closed hi-hat while the right continues to play the cowbell.

The rudiments used as fill-ins for our solo are the nine- and thirteen-stroke rolls, leading with the right hand. Count "1-&-2-&-3, 4-&-5-&-6."

The thirteen-stroke roll is counted: "1-&-2-&-3-&-4."

Once you're comfortable with the exercises, have fun playing them all in the solo below.

Rob Leytham is a private drum instructor at Antioch Music Center in Kansas City, Missouri. He has written five books for Mel Bay Publications and is a member of the prog/rock group Ancient Vision. *Copyright ©2000.*

Funk/Rock Clave

More Fun For Your Left Foot

by Roger Odell



My article "Developing Left-Foot Clave" (August '99) dealt with the three traditional clave rhythms of son, rumba, and bossa nova, played with the hi-hat foot over simple rock or funk grooves. We can further develop these ideas in two ways: first, by taking traditional clave patterns and omitting certain notes, and second, by inventing new clave rhythms. For those who don't have a pedal/cowbell bracket, ride rhythms on your cymbal or X-hats, and use the pedaled hi-hat for the clave patterns.

As before, it's helpful to take the usual notation of clave as a two-bar cut-time pattern, and halve all notes and rests to produce a one-bar, common time figure.

This:

becomes:

The first series of examples uses 3:2 son clave patterns, but the 2 side is omitted. This seems to work better in funk or rock grooves, as the second note on the 2 side is normally covered by the snare. Here's our 3:0 clave:

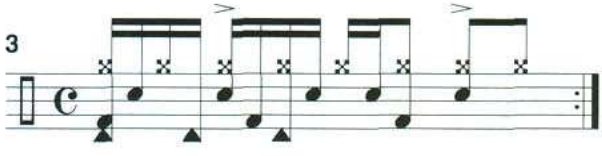
We can now use the absence of left-foot activity in the second half of the bar to introduce bass drum and snare variations without frying our brains.

1

2

The following examples add snare and bass drum in and around the 3 side of the clave.

3



4

The following grooves use the common practice of reversing the clave. We'll refer to this as 0:3 clave.

5

6

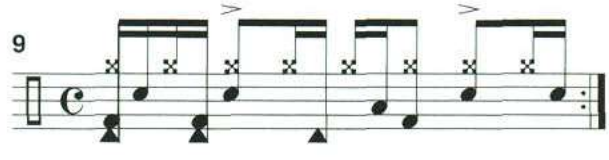
7

As the 3 side of bossa nova clave is the same as son, we can ignore it for the moment. But all of the previous examples can be practiced using the 3 side of rumba clave. Therefore example 1 would become:

8

Take special care when snare or bass drum notes are in unison with the clave. Sometimes it may be preferable to leave out certain notes, as in the rumba version of example 4, where the third bass drum note can be omitted.

9



In the next series of examples, we can take traditional clave rhythms and move or discard certain notes to create new patterns. Taking the bossa nova and delaying each note by a 16th, we get the following two grooves. Example 11 omits the 2 side of the clave.

10

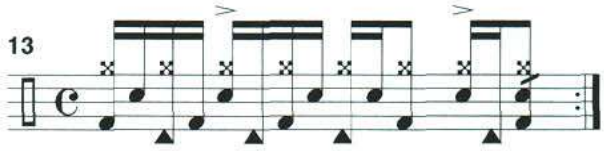
11

We can also try a mixed 3:2 clave pattern by taking the first part of the rumba clave with the second side of the bossa nova. Let's try four on the floor with this one.

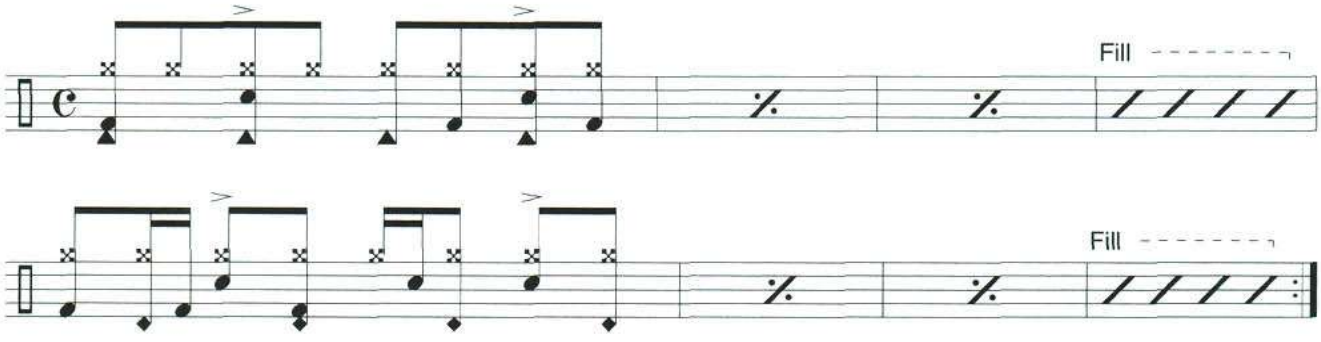
12

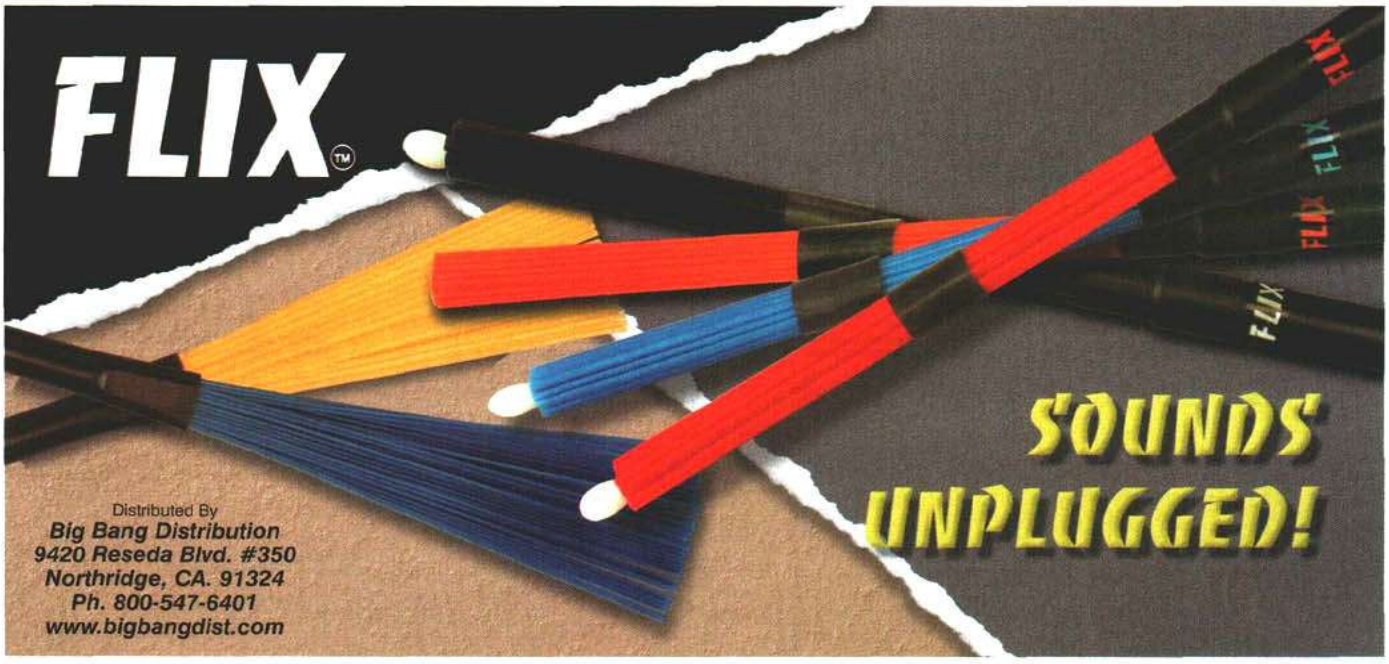
Here's a groove using the 2 side of bossa nova clave with the first note only of the 3 side, plus a note flown in from nowhere! For live performance I pedal a jam block instead of a cowbell, and the right hand plays hi-hat with the clutch released. Try to get a slight shuffle feel with a long buzz on the last 8th note.

13



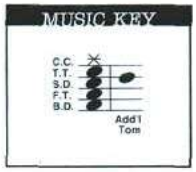
Finally, if you can get hold of two left foot "gadgets," try setting one up with a cowbell and the other with a tambourine. Play a simple groove for three bars with the left foot playing quarter notes on cowbell. Then ad-lib a one-bar fill while changing your foot over to the tambourine. Now play a different groove with the tambourine by playing alternate off-beat 8th notes. During the next fill bar, get your foot back to the cowbell and repeat. Try using this arrangement with any two of the above grooves.





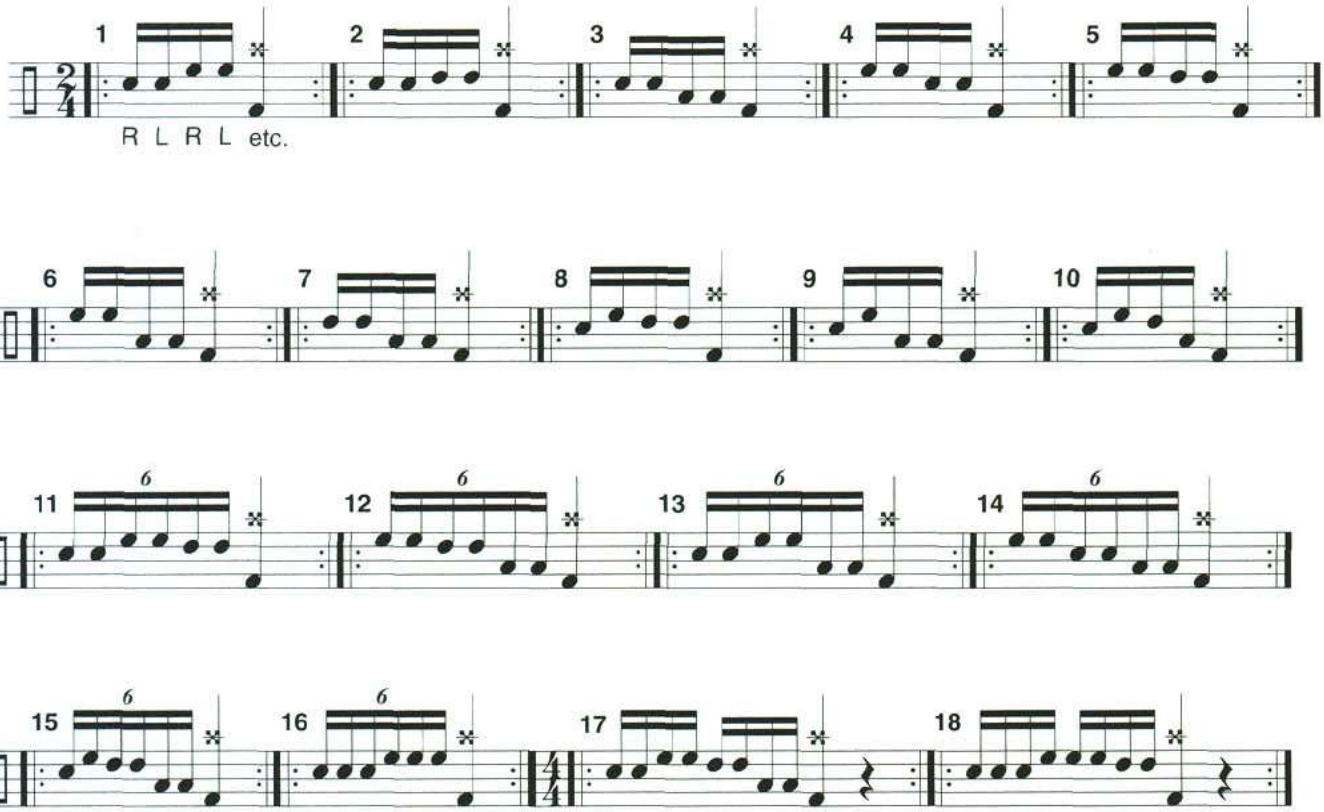
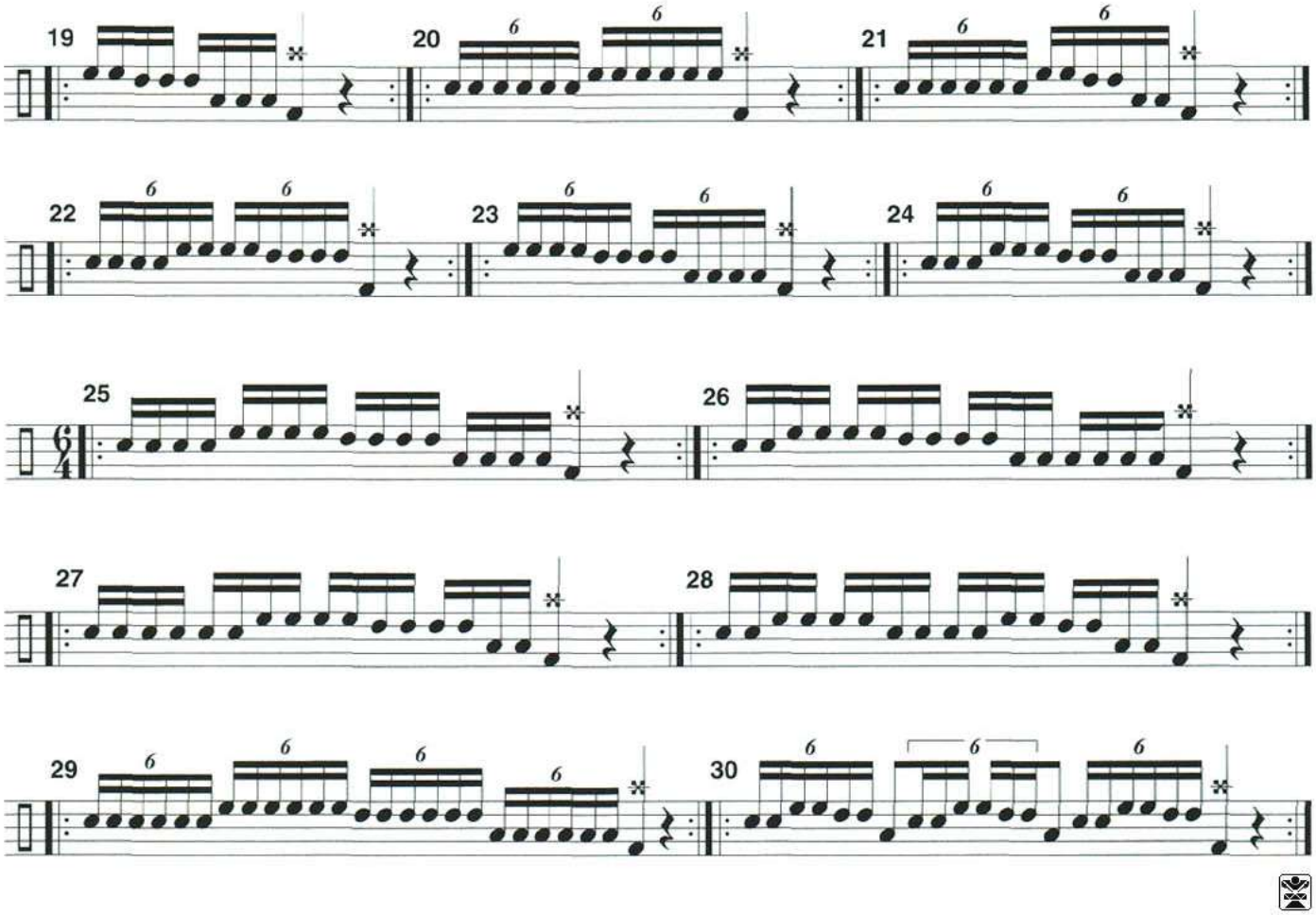
The 30-Minute Speed Workout

by Ed Breckenfeld



What do Billy Cobham, Dennis Chambers, and Vinnie Colaiuta all have in common? Among other things, they each have a well-deserved reputation for uncanny single stroke speed around the kit. If you've heard them on recordings or seen them live, you've probably asked, "How do they move *so fast?* But a better question to ask is, "How can I improve my *own* speed around the set?"

Every drummer has his own physical gifts and limitations. Speed *can* be developed, but it takes hard work, repetition, and a stick-to-it attitude to generate those quick moves. This 30-minute workout can help.

The following exercises were designed to help you develop single stroke speed from one drum to another. Start each pattern slowly until you're comfortable with the movement. Then gradually increase to your top speed. If you begin to hit rims, click sticks, or play uneven rhythms, slow down until things smooth out. But try to keep pushing the tempo up every time you do the workout. Keep your moves as fluid as possible, and use one continuous motion for each exercise. Wasted movements slow you down. Always flow *smoothly* from drum to drum. Once you've hit your top speed, play each pattern *fifty to one hundred times.* Though that sounds like a lot, if you're going fast enough it should only take a minute or two to do each exercise. It's only with this type of *repetition,* over days and weeks of practice, that you'll see drastic improvement in your speed around the set. And while you may not rival Cobham, Chambers, or Colaiuta, you'll set some new standards for *yourself.* And that's what's most important!

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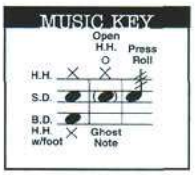
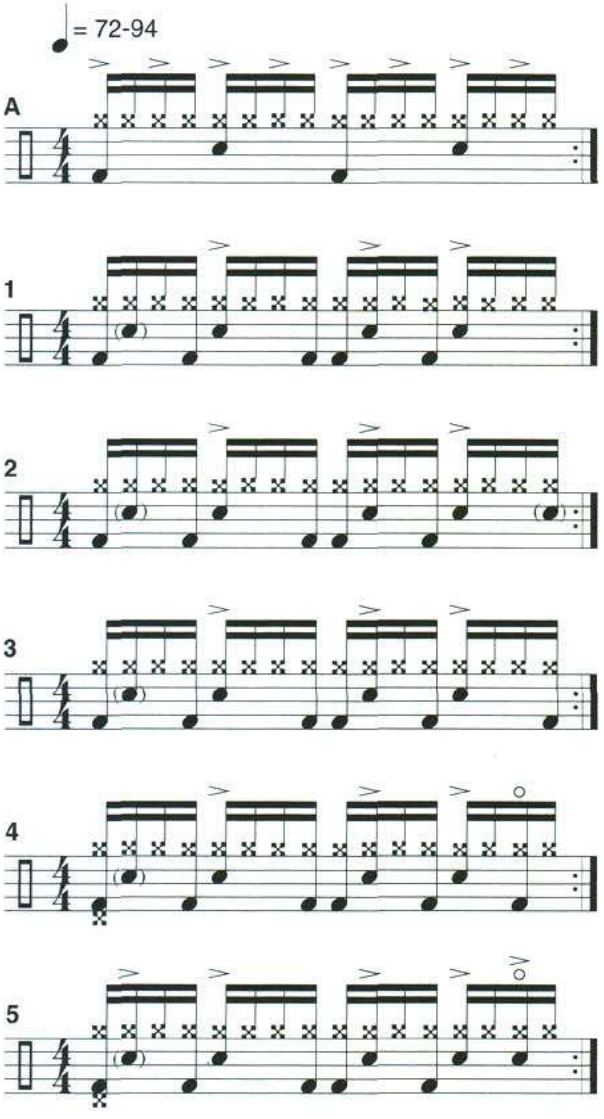
A Funky Workout

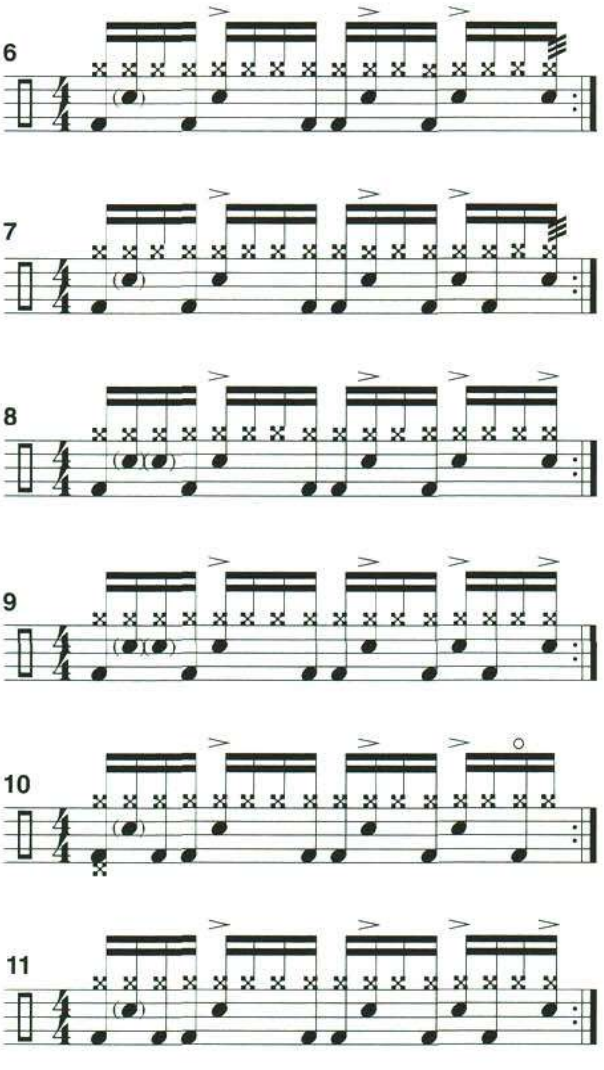
by John Xepoleas

I recently had the pleasure of hearing Bill Stewart's funky side on the Maceo Parker CD *Mo' Roots* (Verve). Bill plays great on the entire recording, but he's playing *super* funky on the second track of the CD, "Chicken." It was his great groove on this cut that inspired the following workout.

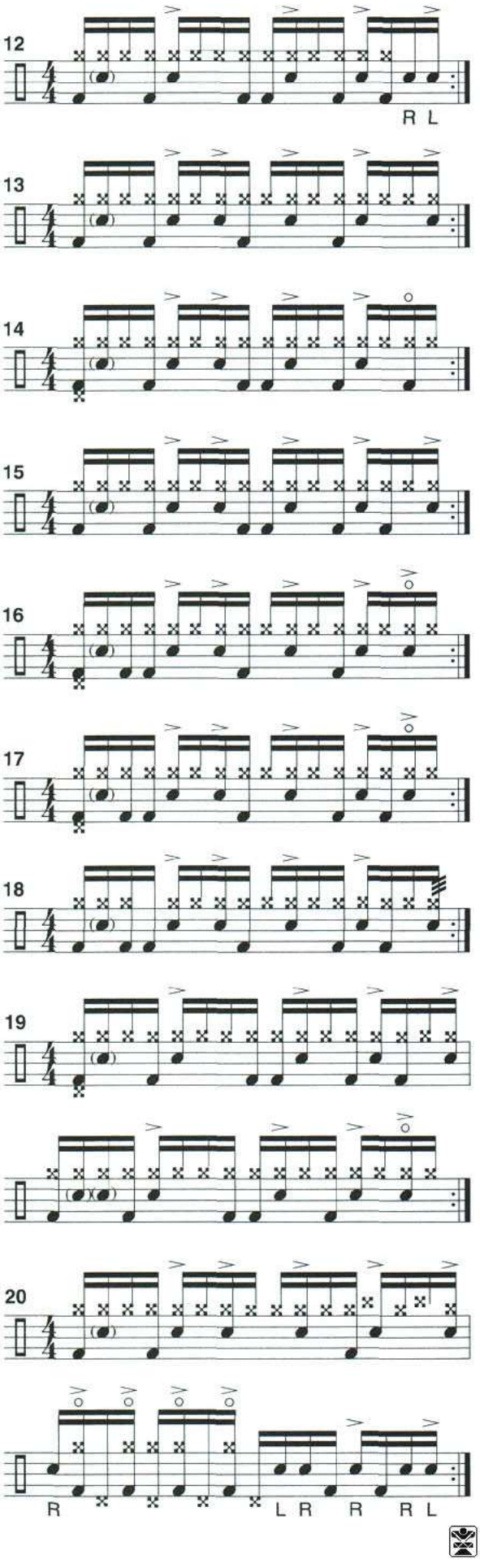
Start by getting a good feel for the hi-hat part (example A). The hi-hat should be tightly closed and played with one hand (right or left). Play the accented notes at medium volume, with the shoulder of the stick on the edge of the hi-hat. Play the unaccented notes softly, with the tip of the stick on top of the hi-hat. This technique should be applied to all the examples in the workout.

Next, practice examples 1-20 one at a time. Practice each one until you can play them smoothly and with a good feel. Once you're comfortable with all the examples, you're ready for the fun part.

Set your metronome, drum machine, or click track to quarter note = 72-94. Play each example for at least one minute. Make a smooth transition from one example to the next without stopping. Twenty minutes later you should be feeling the funk. Practice this workout for a few weeks, and I'm certain you'll be happy with your newfound funkdom.







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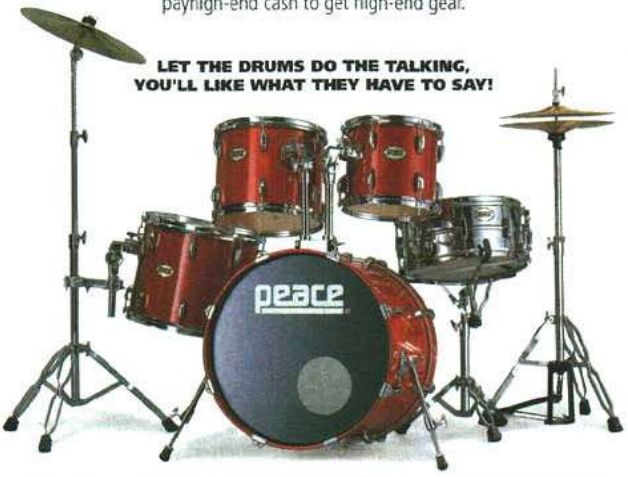

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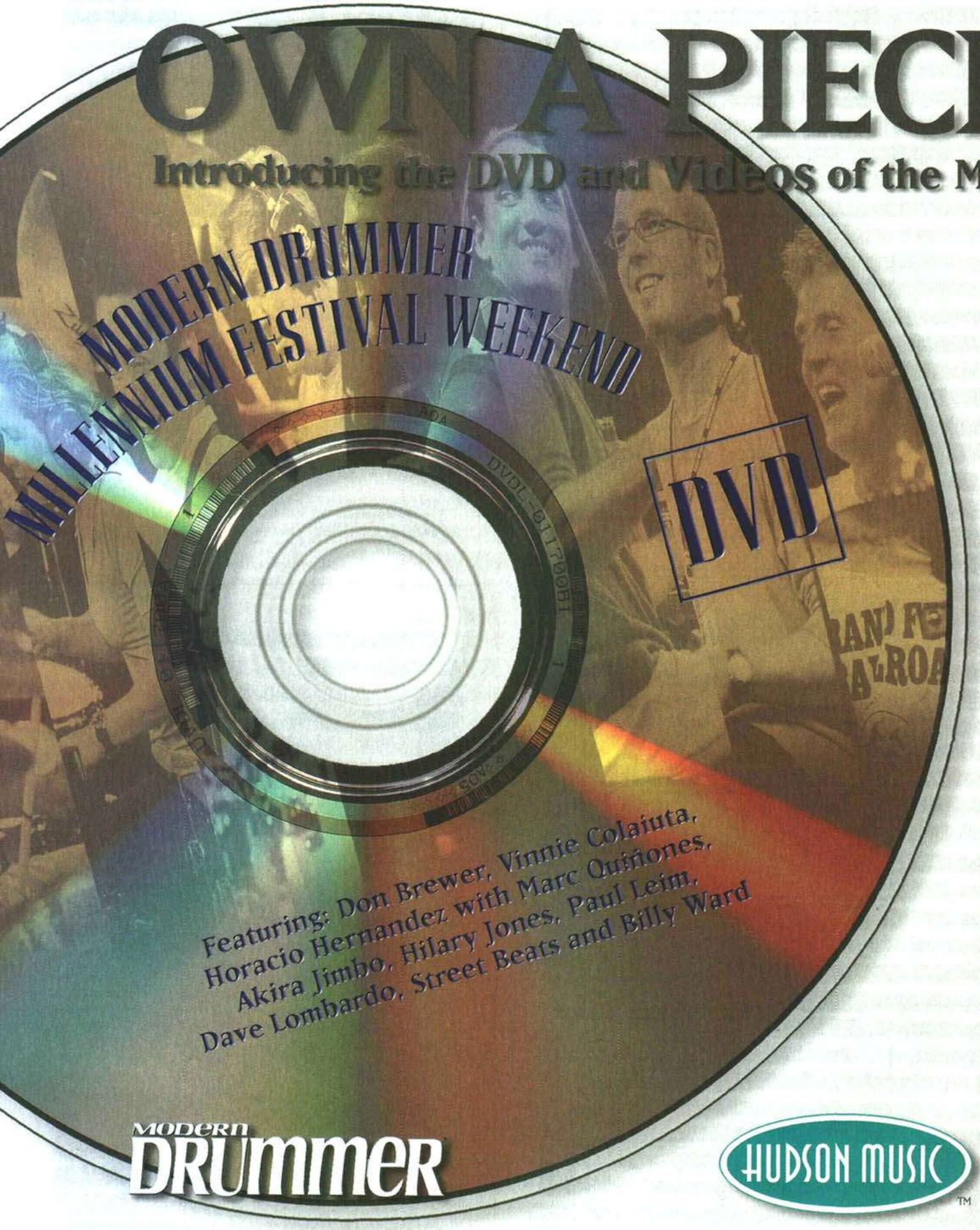
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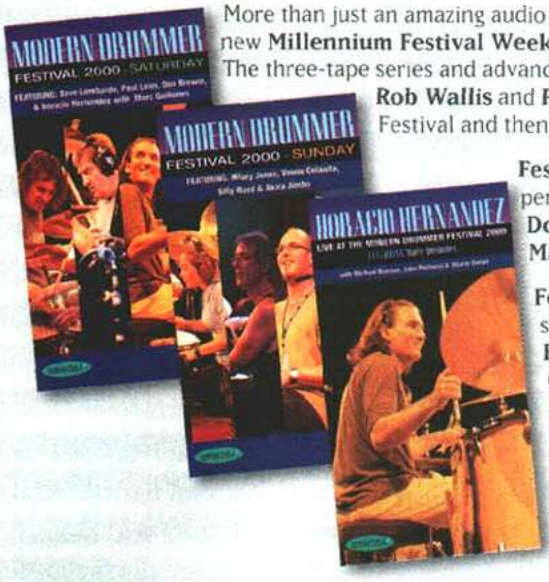

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Dennis Williams

"I've played drums since the age of eleven," says St. Louis native Dennis Williams. "I played for four years in local jazz ensembles, two years in a drum & bugle corps, and four years playing professionally with various cover bands. But after spending a lot of time playing 'progressive metal' and 'alternative rock,' I finally decided to leave the world of highly technical music 'for musicians only' in favor of a more simplistic, fun approach, like that of the drummers who influenced me. I grew up listening to 'four on the floor' drummers like Phil Rudd, Ringo Starr, Bun E. Carlos, and Marky Ramone."

Dennis is currently playing with the Ded Bugs, a Ramones-influenced punk-pop band (www.DedBugs.com). They play the St. Louis area regularly, travel in the Midwest, and have enjoyed regional airplay for their three CDs. Dennis focuses on solid, no-frills grooving on those recordings, in keeping with his simple/fun concept. But he has also recorded CDs with A.O.K. (power pop), My 2 Planets (prog/alt rock), and Bonehouse (prog metal). "I really enjoy playing live," says Dennis, "but I take my greatest pride from the studio work I've done. I enjoy that environment, so one of my goals is to increase my work as a studio drummer—both with the Ded Bugs and as a freelance drummer."

Dennis plays on a refurbished silver sparkle 1987 Pearl Export kit, with Paiste, Zildjian, and Sabian cymbals. He uses one of three snares (two Ludwigs, one Yamaha), depending on the musical application and his mood.

Brad Draper

Twenty-seven-year-old Brad Draper is what's often termed a "multi-percussionist." He graduated from the University of Northern Colorado with a degree in Music Education and lots of experience playing in wind and percussion ensembles. He also won three solo marimba awards.

Now pursuing a master's degree in percussion performance at the University of Minnesota, Brad has been active as a private teacher, and as a "legit" percussionist with the National Repertory Orchestra and the Westminster Symphony. But he knows his way around a drumkit, too. He spent the summer of 1995 with the All American College Band at Disneyland, and he has performed extensively with jazz pianist Joe Bonner. He recorded a CD with Denver funk/R&B band Humble Groove, and subs with touring band On Second Thought. And he played five dates (including two at the Breckenridge Jazz Festival) with saxophonist Joe Vincelli.

"I consider my forte to be the drumset," says Brad. "Some of my greatest inspirations include Philly Joe Jones, Elvin Jones, Tony Williams, Jack DeJohnette, Jeff Watts, Brian Blade, Dave Weckl, and Dennis Chambers. I'm primarily a jazz player, but I also love to play funk and fusion."

Brad currently plays a Premier Signia kit with Zildjian cymbals. His immediate goal is to achieve his master's degree. But he intends to continue his outside work as well, taking part in the busy Minneapolis music scene.

Craig McIntyre

Craig McIntyre is a busy guy. He plays six nights a week in the New England area, primarily with an instrumental project called Johnny A. & The Bam Boom Ensemble, led by former Peter Wolf guitarist Johnny A. The group plays a mixture of Latin, surf, and R&B music. Their debut CD, *Sometime Tuesday Morning,* has received rave reviews in regional newspapers and guitar magazines, and has been getting considerable airplay on the East Coast. (For more information on the band, surf to www.johnnya.com.) Craig's playing on the CD is tasteful and creative, lending solid support without ever being intrusive.

Recording is an important part of Craig's activities. He recently completed a CD with R&B vocalist Toni Lynn Washington on Tone-Cool/Universal records. He also records for several singer/songwriters in the Cambridge, Massachusetts folk scene. In addition, he occasionally records contributions for the soundtrack of the HBO series *Sex In The City,* with a Boston-based swing/lounge band called Four Piece Suit. He plays a Yamaha kit, with Ludwig snare drums and Zildjian cymbals.

"I think it's more important to be a team player than a chops fanatic." says Craig. "My influences are Al Jackson, Jim Keltner, Steve Jordan, Andy Newmark, John Bonham, and Steve Ferrone. I also play around on piano and guitar, which I believe helps me communicate with other musicians in writing and arranging parts."

Craig's immediate goal is to tour with Johnny A., but ultimately he wants to be a first-call session player for different original projects. "I began playing music when I was eleven years old," he says. "I've never wanted to do anything else."

If you'd like to appear in *On The Move,* send us an audio or video cassette of your best work (preferably both solo and with a band) on three or four songs, along with a brief bio sketch and a high-quality color or black & white close-up photo. (Polaroids are not acceptable. Photos will not be paid for or credited.) The bio sketch should include your full name and age, along with your playing style(s), influences, current playing situation (band, recording project, freelance artist, etc.), how often and where you are playing, and what your goals are (recording artist, session player, local career player, etc.). Include any special items of interest pertaining to what you do and how you do it, and a list of the equipment you use regularly. Send your material to On The Move, Modern Drummer Publications, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Material **cannot** be returned, so please **do not** send original tapes or photos.

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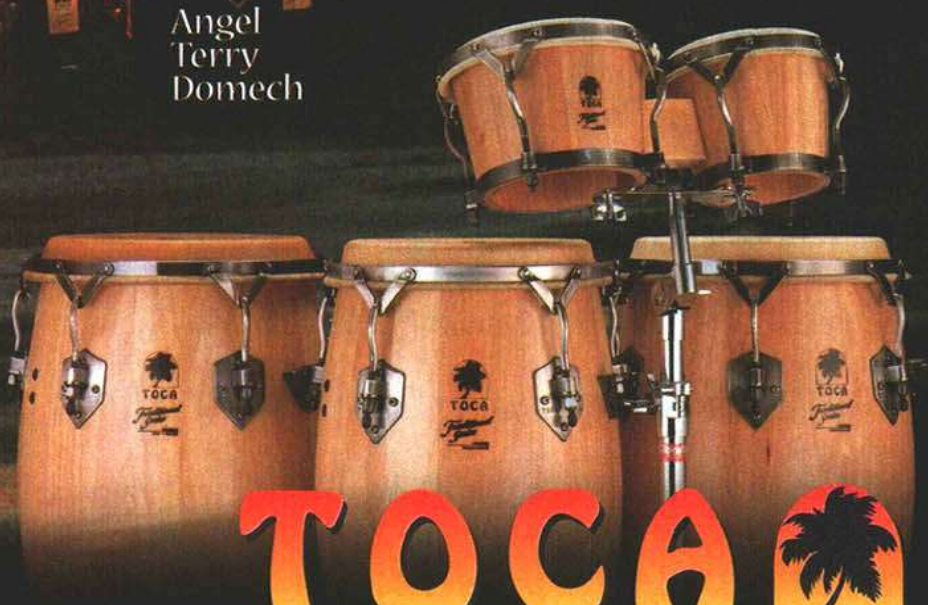

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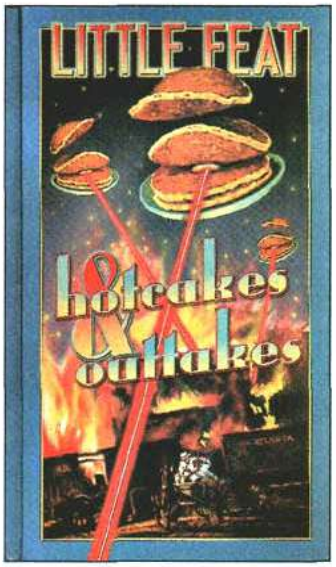
RECORDINGS

poor 0 rating scale 10 classic

9 Little Feat Hotcakes 8 Outtakes: 30 Years Of Little Feat

Richie Hayward, Don Heffington, Jeff Porcaro (dr), Sam Clayton (perc). Roy Estrada. Kenny Gladney (bs), Lowell George, Paul Barrere. Fred Tackett (gtr, vcl). Bill Payne (kybd, vcl), Shaun Murphy (vcl), others



Lovers of Little Feat will be thrilled with Rhino's four-CD compilation, and anyone who missed the boat can hop on and get caught up in a hurry. Not everything here made the final cut, so to speak, but the drumming is top-notch throughout. Hayward plays the great majority of the tracks, and he deserves a lot of credit for the band's muscle as well as invention. Little Feat has always been quirky and crafty; on disc one's "Cold, Cold, Cold," Hayward slides in and completely overpowers Lowell George's cheesy vintage drum machine with a monster groove. Discs two and three show the band becoming ever more polished, studio-friendly, and musically diverse, bringing in horns and other guest instrumentalists. Disc four includes more live takes, demos, and studio outtakes, such as a Frank Zappa-produced demo of "Lightning Rod Man" from 1966, as well as an early stretch called "Jazz Thing In 10," which near as I can tell is in 11. (Rhino)

Robin Tolleson

6 Green Day Warning

Tré Cool (dr), Billie Joe Armstrong (vcl, gtr), Mike **Dirot** (bs, vcl)

I When you burn as they did, you run the danger of fizzling out. Fortunately, with *Warning,* Green Day has kept up the heat. Their sound has "matured," with the addition of a few extra instruments and a little editing. As a result, the vocals project more richly, and, in the absence of the former clatter, Tré Cool's drum sound is finally a known quantity. "Deadbeat" introduces a guitar riff reminiscent of the Beatles' "I Feel Fine". Even more pleasantly derivative is "Hold On," with its harmonica cop from the fab four's "I Should Have Known Better." Throughout, Tré Cool's backbeat has got a sound drummers will talk about, and his kick is singularly solid. God knows these guys probably still spit on stage. It's just that they're finally pulling off real songs, such as the mid-tempo closer, "Macy's Day Parade." (Reprise)

T. Bruce Wittet

8 Joey Baron We'll Soon Find Out

Joey Baron (dr), Arthur Blythe (sx), Ron Carter (bs). Bill Frisell (gtr)

Is there anything Joey Baron can't do? Put a tricky chart in front of him, and he'll clarify complicated passages like a great actor doing Shakespeare. Turn him loose on simpler forms, and his witty phrasing and impossibly deep groove will make you smile almost as widely as he does whenever he's seated at the kit. The latter is the case on *We'll Soon Find Out,* Baron's second release with his Down Home quartet. The tunes—all capably written by the drummer—are a friendly mixture of boogaloo, Latin jazz, swing, and ballads, without an avant-garde honker in the batch. And though the LP is chock-full of delicious, sprightly drumming, Baron knows when to step back and let his crack "sidemen" do their thing. (Intuition, www.schott-music.com)

Michael Parillo

KICKIN' OUT THE NEW

7 Caviar Caviar

Caviar's self-tilled debut is a tidy package of all your musical memories crammed into one disc. A rhythmic Christmas morning, there's virtually no sound that isn't sampled or layered into this collection, including church bells on "OK Nightmare." The song has a simple structure, but drummer **Jason Batchko's** dancy hi-hat/kick/snare keeps it fun and fresh. Unafraid to use studio tricks to achieve different sounds, Batchko provides some of the biggest hooks in an album crammed with them. (Island)

6 Bare Jr. Brainwasher

Down-home rage rock? Southern grunge? We don't know what to call a band that features a dulcimer player and a vocal-busting son of a country star, but Bare Jr. does boast one fine ole' drummer. **Keith Brogdon's** huge slamming snare sound anchors *Brainwasher.* He isn't fancy about what he's doing—this drummer's all meat 'n' potatoes—but Brogdon's pure rock 'n' roll energy perfectly matches the fervor and intensity of Bobby Bare Jr.'s grab-em-by-the-throat vocal style. (Virgin)

7 Bim Skala Bim Krinkle

There's ska bands, and then there's SKA bands. Many seem to get by on charm, but Bim Skala Bim comes out on top for songwriting, performance, *and* charm. *Krinkle* is full of pure and true sounds, many courtesy of drummer **Jim Arhelger.** Great syncopation, perfect timing—Arhelger's snare is right on top of the beat, not a millisecond out of step—clean fills, and quick sidestick work all add up to the quintessential ska drummer. (Beatville)

Fran Azzarto and Lisa Crouch

8 Shane Theriot Highway 90

"Mean" Willie Green, J.D. Blair, David Northrup (dr), Jim Roberts (perc), Shane Theriot {gtr), Victor Wooten, Paul Chapman. Adam Nilti, Kim Stone (bs), others

With an ear for a catchy guitar hook and a good working knowledge of fusion, funk, and blues, Neville Brothers guitarist Theriot delivers a hit with his solo debut. Theriot has assembled a splendid ensemble, but the formidable percussion cast is what makes the record really move. David Northrup (Les Dudek) serves up some hot gumbo funk on "Highway 90" and sure-handed fusiony blues licks on "Punch" and "Shiho." J.D. Blair (Victor Wooten, Take 6, Shania Twain) plays some hot and splashy funk on "Trashy" and builds "Cabildo Breeze" with intensity. And longtime Nevilles drummer Willie Green turns the groove to "It Ain't My Fault" inside out and upside down, gives "Bayou Chicken" its second-line flavor, and updates Quincy Jones' theme from *Sanford & Son* with hip, funky syncopation. (Shose Records. www.shanethBriot.com)

Robin Tolleson

8 J Mascis & The Fog More Light

J Mascis (dr, gtr, vcl, kybd), Robert Pollard (vcl). Kevin Shields (gtr, perc, vcl)

Mascis may be *the* guitar hero of the '90s alt-rock nation, but the guy's just as killer a drummer. J was known to lend a lively bash to his last I band, Dinosaur Jr., and here he takes the reins again, tearing up the kit with more energy than technique—but what energy! Whether nailing the j lead guitar accents on the hook to the opener, "Sameday," double-timing I the end of "Back Before You Go," or crash-riding the chorus of...well...just about every song here, J's joyful wailing is a thing to behold. Honestly, The Fog is just the next level of the Mascis solo-album-as-band-project method, so fans are not in for any huge surprises with *More Light.* But with music this loud, poppy, and churning, who needs different? Just keep it coming, J.

Adam Budofsky

7 John Wesley Harding Confessions Of St. Ace

Greg Morrow, Steve Brewster (dr), Martin Feveyear, Eric Darken (perc), John Wesley Harding (gtr, vcl). Gary Burnette (gtr), Tim Lauer, Jelf Roach (kybd). Mark Hill (bs)

Put John Wesley Harding's *Confessions Of St. Ace* in your CD changer and sit back as crisp snare sounds and ringing toms pour from your speakers. Greg Morrow plays the bulk of the material, and "She's A Piece Of Work" features his slammin' 2/4 and ornamental kick on a mid-tempo funk groove. "People Love To Watch You Die" is another mid-tempo ditty with Greg's drums swaying back and forth over a batch of percussive goodies by Martin Feveyear. And on "Goth Girl" Morrow plays with the snare placement just to shake things up a bit, before shifting back on track. Elsewhere Steve Brewster adds his own bit of magic to this truly wonderful album. (Mammoth)

Fran Azzarto and Lisa Crouch

7 40 Grit Heads

Mike Bennett (dr), James Santiago (vcl). Chris Anderson (gtr), Kevin Young (bs)

This menacing brand of muscular rock is a balance of speed metal prowess and complex musical meters. Bennett's quick and precise double-kick attacks gouge out a 7/8 beat in "Groin" and puncture holes in the 5/8 rhythm of sludge rocker "Ground *Zero."* Amid songs about recovering alcoholics and death by second-hand smoke, Bennett cleverly masks even times with off-kilter cymbal work and dance feels to lighten the record's massive tone. But beware: This combination of swirling, distorted guitar effects and blazing drum fills is not for the faint of heart. (Metal Blade)

Will Romano

WHAT IN THE WORLD

8 Tabla BeatScience

Tala Matrix

Zakir Hussain, son of the late tabla master Ustad Alla Rakha, plays brilliantly on these "adventures in electro-acoustic hypercussion" constructed by studio magician Bill Laswell. Laswell's futuristic cut-and-paste technique only enhances the already incredible performances used as the basis for these long, drum 'n' bassy tracks. **Talvin Singh, Trilok Gurtu, and Karsh Kale** also make significant contributions. (Palm/Axiom)

7 Afroshock

Accomodating Gods

Afroshock is the dynamic duo of **Davide Giovannini** (drumset, timbales, vocals) and **Maurizio Ravalico** (congas, percussion, vocals). Their live-in-the-studio performance on Afro-Cuban rhythms shows a deep respect for the roots of the music, while their own unique grooves take it to another level, (www.clmirecords.fieeserve.co.uk)

7 Various

Angola 70s; 1974-1978

This lively collection is from a period in the African nation's history when political strife and violence left its mark on everyone. Since the country's situation was inextricably tied to those of several Latin American countries, it's no surprise the incredible variety of styles represented here (boleros, merengues, sembas, rumbas, lamentos) reflect idiosyncratic takes on Latin rhythms. This is part of an extensive series of urban Angolan music from the '60s through the '90s, and it's a fascinating glimpse at cross-cultural invention. (Buda Music/Allegro)

David Licht

9 Mayhem Grand Declaration Of War

Hellhammer (dr), Blasphemer (gtr), Maniac (vcl). Necrobutcher (bs)

While bands like Slayer and Cannibal Corpse were injecting horror themes into their music, Norwegian black metal band Mayhem was carving out a real-life horror story. Early singer Dead killed himself with a shotgun blast to the head in 1991, and in 1993, original guitarist Euronymous was murdered by early session bassist Count Grishnackh. Make what you will of their off-stage activities, there's no denying the brutal creativity of *Grand Declaration Of War.* Great drumming runs rampant in this genre, but Mayhem's Hellhammer stands—no, towers—over most of the pack. His ability to juggle numerous meters among all four limbs is jaw-dropping. His double-bass speed is awesome. And his beat variations are mind-boggling. No wonder this album is such a grand declaration of black metal. (Necropolis)

Jeff Perlah

8 Rachel Z Trio On The Milky Way Express

Allison Miller (dr), Rachel *Z* (kybd). Miriam Sullivan (bs)

This is some fine music-making, and drummer Allison Miller makes a statement from the very first tune, "Pinnochio." Given a solo mid-tune, she composes a dynamic musical interlude utilizing polyrhythms and every drum and cymbal around her. It's solid and never strained. On "Footprints" she shows power and poise, giving the toms a workout and grinding out some Tony Williams-ish fills. Miller swings well on "Dolores," and throws caution to the wind on "Black Nile," while showing sensitivity under Sullivan's bowed bass. She gives "Three Marias" the punch and groove that it needs, laying into it a bit heavier on Z's elegant solo. A tribute to the great saxist Wayne Shorter (Miles Davis, Weather Report), *Express* makes the listener appreciate Shorter's compositional talents—as well as the interpretive abilities of all three players here. (Tone Center)

Robin Tolleson

8 Robert Walter's 20th Congress Money Shot

Stanton Moore (dr). Chuck *Prada* (perc), Robert Walter (kybd). Cochemea Juan Gastelum (sx). David Carano (bs)

Presiding over groove country, Robert Walter's 20th Congress delivers *Money Shot,* a rowdy address on the state of funk. Walter's is the only congress around that demands its constituency shake their hips and party till dawn. Crescent City drummer Stanton Moore, the guv'nor of that slippery territory between swung and straight notes, keeps the steamy vibe cooking with streamlined beats tailored for maximum boogie power. Wisely exploiting Moore's groovy presence, Walter's Congress hands him a bunch of quick, tasty drum breaks throughout the LP. Since history repeats itself, look for sampled snippets of these tiny solos to enliven the funk tracks of the future. (Fog City, www.togworld.com)

Michael Parillo

7 Vast Music For People

Steve Clarke (dr), Jon Crosby. Rowan Robertson (gtr). Thomas Froggatt (bs)

Like Trent Reznor's Nine Inch Nails, Jon Crosby's Vast suggests its auteur spent long teenage nights listening to The Cure, Sisters Of Mercy, and other goth-rock gods. But a flair for orchestral arrangements and big rock hooks provides Crosby with a unique musical voice. Vast is also unusual in that their songs are arranged with an accute attention to detail. Every note has its place—and purpose. As such, even though the drum tracks sound like they were given some ProTools treatment, you marvel at how *right* they are. Steve Clarke doesn't just blend into the background, though. While sensitive to the songs, he picks his spots, adding cool tom patterns and snare fills to maximum effect. Play along to this album, and you'll definitely learn a thing or two about musical drums. (Elektra)

Adam Budofsky

'70s ROCKERS RIGHTEOUS RETURN

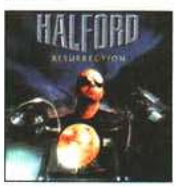
7 Steve Walsh Glossolalia

The dynamic vocalist/keyboardist for 70s sophisticate rockers Kansas, Steve Walsh returns with an solo release that rivals even his return to Kansas earlier this year. Walsh's passionate and theatrical arrangements are musically and lyrically expressive within a unique blend of rock styles. Drum sensation **Virgil Donati** fills the drum chair in a rather inconspicuous setting, compared to his typical flashy fusion format. Donati plays for the music and goes virtually unnoticed, which is a good thing, as it shows his ability to give the music exactly what is called for. (www.magoacarta.net)

8 Alice Cooper Brutal Planet

Theater-rock legend Alice Cooper has never been one to beat around the bush regarding social issues. On *Brutal Planet,* Alice takes a cold hard look at the human race past and present, and exposes our darkest sides with hauntingly explicit lyrics and an excellent modern rock sound aimed to please the younger rock generation. Former KISS drummer **Eric Singer** lays it down strong and simple, allowing the music and lyrics to guide the listener through this disturbing set. Welcome to our nightmare. (www.spitfirerecords.com)

6 Halford Resurrection



This "return to metal" format is the best thing Halford has done since leaving Judas Priest. Still, although he proves he's still the king of metal vocals, the music on *Resurrection* fails to reach the intensity and catchy melodic arrangements that kept the Priest on top of the metal heap for many years. The drumming of **Bobby Jarzombek** is solid, as he follows the Priest-like material with traditional double bass and hard-hitting metal chops. If Halford is returning to metal, he should resolve his differences with the Priest and resurrect the real Metal Gods, (www.metal-is.com)

Mike Haid

VIDEOS

8 Brain's Lessons by Brain

level: beginner to intermediate, 60 minutes, $24.95

While watching Brain eat dinner with his parents, we learn how he uses ostinato patterns to develop his four-way independence. As he sunbathes on a windswept San Francisco rooftop, he explains the nuts and bolts of playing go-go beats, and how he uses his left hand on a conga to help get a little swing in the feel. Despite the lighthearted approach, Brain's a serious student of funk, and the producers use a lot of clever camera angles and lenses to help him present his information. Brain demonstrates snare tones and how to use different parts of the stick to get various shadings out of the hi-hat. He also uses stories from his Primus sessions to illustrate the importance of leaving space for the other players. Whether or not Brain's shtick appeals to you, he does try to connect drumming to the world, not confine it to the practice booth. He has fun, and we all learn something in the process. (Warner Bros.)

Robin Tolleson

5 Traditional Gospel Drumming by LaVell Peete

level: beginner, 58 minutes, $24.95

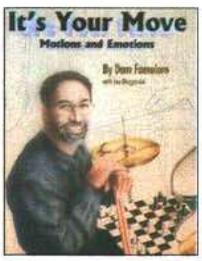
LaVell Peete seems to have a good idea with *Traditional Gospel Drumming,* talking about developing "even hands" and how all a drummer really needs to set up the pocket is bass drum, tight snare, and hi-hat. But instead of an in-depth look at some of the popular styles going back to The Hawkins Family and Andrae Crouch & The Disciples, Peete goes back to how to hold the drumstick and the most basic talk about equipment. He does demonstrate straight and swung two-beats, but that's it. Of course, there's nothing wrong with talking about a basic stroke, or how to set up your drums, or breathing. But these things don't have much specifically to do with gospel drumming. On the plus side, Peete talks with choral director Kenneth Knox about the bottom line—keeping the tempo—as well as how to play introductions and the importance of keeping eye contact. If he'd included some historical perspective and about a dozen beats, even the questionable camera work would've been tolerable. Sometimes "less is more" goes too far. (MelBay)

Robin Tolleson

BOOKS

8 It's Your Move by Dom Famularo with Joe Beryamini

level: beginner to advanced, $19.95



In an extremely user-friendly and focused book, Famularo and Bergamini give the reader an outline for developing a full complement of expressive tools. Artistic expression is the concept that they embrace. Versatility in all styles is the goal. To get you there, the authors employ cool flip-page illustrations of various strokes, discuss the musicality of the instrument, and cover building a solo to display melody, harmony, rhythm, dynamics, and song arrangement. Elsewhere they give proper weight to flams and ruffs, creating a good balance between the hands, playing odd times with precision, and firing off accents with the hands while keeping the feet free. A lot of this information may seem basic—and it is. But it's the basis of a great foundation in drums. (Wizdom Enterprises, [631] 732-0203. Dom Famularo can be reached atwww.domfamularo.com.)

Robin Tolleson

Correction

In December's *Critique we* reviewed Ed Thigpen's book *The Sound Of Brushes.* Unfortunately we kept referring to it as *The Essence Of Brushes.* Silly us. In actuality, *The Essence Of Brushes* is the accompanying *video to* the book *The Sound Of Brushes.* So, *Sound:* book, Essence: video. Apologies.

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THE EDITORS' VAULT

8 Stories About Us

Brian Madey (dr, perc), Ian Lloyd (bs. vcl), Michael Brawn (kybd). Steve Love (gb, vcl)

Stories' big 1973 hit, the soulful "Brother Louie," gave little indication of the musical depth within this buried treasure. The brainchild of chamber-pop genius Michael Brown (The Left Banke/"Walk Away Renee"), Stories saw Brown & co. rocking out and incorporating glam, progressive rock, pop, and folk. Drummer Brian Madey complements each tune brilliantly. His feel is consistently round and comfy, his chops abundant yet tasteful, and his sense of dynamics on target. Stories called it quits soon after this album, and Madey dropped off the radar screen. It would be a shame if this were his only moment in the sun. Brian, call home! (KamaSutra/Buddah)

Adam Budofsky

GOING UNDERGROUND

8 Soplattercell OAH

Disarming aural blitzkreigs define guitarist David Tom's collaboration with several drummers on this computer-crazy melange, proving that there's uncharted musical territory yet to be explored. **Geoffrey Gordon, Dean Sharp, Matt Chamberlain, and Zachary Alford** are the co-conspirators here. (Celldivision)

7 Elf Power The Winter Is Coming

Psychedelia of a more song-oriented nature is provided this month by Elf Power, whose latest, *The Winter Is Coming,* recalls Floyd, Hendrix, and contemporary lo-fi/hi-hooks bands. Drummer **Aaron Wegelin** can do the Moe Tucker drone, the Ringo thump, and that old psych-pop staple, the martial snare cadence, with the best of 'em. (Sugar Free)

6 Schema Schema

Schema's debut takes the intergalactic route to the center of the mind, plowing long, exploratory jams. When drummer Ric (no last names here) isn't thundering through feedback-laced excursions, odd drum loops add great effect to Stereolab-ish Euro-drones—not surprising, as Lab's Mary Hansen and Seattle's space invaders Hovercraft make up this cosmic convoy. Groovy. (5RC)

Adam Budofsky

Muscle Memory

Programming Perfection Into Your Performance

by John Thomakos

If your goal is to develop your musical skills and proficiency on your instrument, it goes without saying that you must practice regularly. But what exactly are you supposed to be *doing* when you practice? To most people the game plan seems obvious: Just learn how to play whatever it is you're working on, then make it sound better.

That's definitely the right idea. But with some insight and knowledge about *how* you learn, you can begin to make your practice more productive and enjoyable. And you'll gain better results in less time.

First, let's define "practice." According to Webster's Dictionary, "practice" means: 1: To perform or work at repeatedly, so as to become proficient. 2: To train by repeated exercises. So, is the old adage "Practice makes perfect" really true? It depends on how we go about doing it. A more accurate statement might be: *"Perfect* practice makes perfect."

Perfect practice (practice with few or no mistakes) makes perfect, because our bodies memorize movement through repetition. This is called "muscle memory." Muscle memory training is the key to performing any physical skill with consistency, confidence, and fluency. By learning exactly how muscle-memory programming takes place, we can more effectively incorporate it into our drumming development.

Muscle Memory In Everyday Life

Think about walking, riding a bike, writing, buttoning a shirt, and the thousands of other physical activities that we perform daily without much thought. They've become easy to accomplish, because we perfected them through correct repetition—which has led to muscle memory. It's the same learning process that athletes have used for years to perfect golf swings, gymnastics moves, and high dives. Correct repetition trains the muscles of our body to perform these and other once-challenging tasks with ease.

Perform the simple task of tying your shoe. Do it slowly, and watch each step carefully. This complicated procedure, which most of us struggled with at first, has now become perfected to the point of being a mindless task. As musicians, our goal is to achieve this level of confidence and comfort when playing our instruments.

The Importance Of Correct Repetition

Our body memorizes movement in much the same way that our mind retains information: through repetition and reinforcement. When we practice an exercise slowly, correctly, and repeatedly, we are programming our body—as well as our mind—to correctly reproduce that movement on command. This is muscle memory. Psychologists have labeled this phenomenon of seemingly effortless execu-

Three Steps To More Productive Practice

Listed below are general guidelines for employing muscle-memory programming. If you're working on something new, start with step one. If your goal is to polish and perfect something you can already play, start with step three.

1 Break down whatever you're working on into small sections. The length of these sections will vary depending on the given example. Some passages may be easier to learn if shortened to just a few beats; others could be one or two measures. The objective is not to bite off more than you can chew. Learn small sections first, then put them together.

2 Practice playing through each small section very slowly. Play it so slowly at first that it is nearly impossible to make a mistake. Mistakes are likely at first, but are also unnecessary if you practice slowly enough. Develop one section at a time. Practice this way until you can easily and comfortably play the notes through with no mistakes. Once you have two sections prepared, join them together and practice them as one. Continue developing the sections, piecing them together until you have reassembled them all into the whole passage. This is the most challenging part, so be very patient.

3 Once you can play the entire passage at a slow tempo, keep it there! Practice repeating the example in four-minute blocks. The more times you repeat a passage correctly at a slow tempo, the better.

I recommend using a digital timer to keep track of your four-minute practice blocks. This will allow you to completely focus on the exercise. When the timer sounds after four minutes, take a break. Relax and breathe for thirty seconds to a minute between each four-minute block. Repeat this cycle throughout your practice session. This is muscle-memory programming at work.

tion as "automaticity." Perhaps a more common term for the same result is "automatic pilot."

> Not even the adrenaline rush connected with an important performance can interrupt the consistency and effectiveness of muscle memory.

Muscle Memory And Music

Developing automaticity when playing an instrument enables you to perform with total confidence, because that performance requires less mental effort. Your playing becomes more natural. Because your body has been programmed to execute the proper movement, you can focus your attention on other things, like dynamics, feel, and musicality. Not even the adrenaline rash connected with an important performance can interrupt the consistency and effectiveness of muscle memory.

It's critical to remember, though, that your muscle memory will be programmed by the repetition of whatever you practice. So you must practice correctly, with the fewest possible mistakes. Repeating mistakes during practice will simply train your body to repeat them during performance, too.

The Big Picture

Although you make progress every time you practice correctly, some techniques and/or passages can take months or even years to perfect. Never be discouraged by obstacles or failure. Both are a major part of learning. With focused persistence, perseverance, and patience, you will eventually attain all of your goals.

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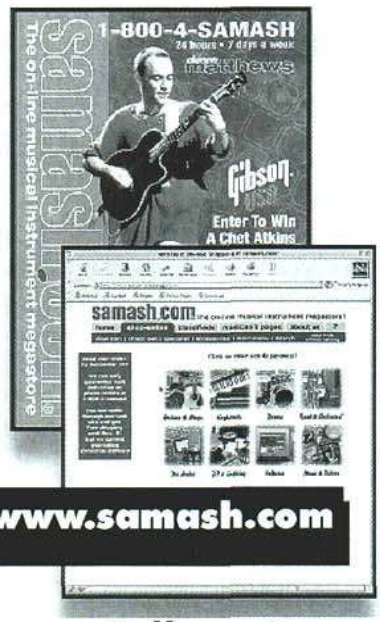

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The Cover Band Scene

How To Make One Size Fit All

by Jeff Decker

I've played in cover bands for the majority of my career as a professional drummer. Over the years, I've also heard many other cover bands perform. Unfortunately, nine times out of ten the drummers I hear don't play anything close to the original groove of the recording. They also play way too many fills. And, generally, they approach every song the same way. As a result, everything the band plays tends to sound the same. Sometimes it seems that the drummer has contempt for the music. He certainly isn't showing respect for it.

And if you think audiences aren't paying attention, you're in for a surprise. They hear a lot more than you think they do. I play with a pretty successful cover band, and we're always being told that we sound just like the record. I take that as a compliment. As scary as it may sound, that's our job. I believe it's one of the reasons we do over two hundred gigs a year.

Through playing with this band, I believe I've come up with a pretty good approach to duplicating many of the drum parts on the songs we play.

The Process

During rehearsals, we first decide what songs we want to add to our song list. We usually do this two or three songs at a time. Second, we make recordings for everyone in the band to take home and study. For me, most of the songs aren't very difficult. Like a lot of professional players, I've been doing this long enough to know what's being played and how to play it just by listening. In fact, very few songs actually require me to sit down and practice them.

There are exceptions, however. For instance, sometimes a recording may have overdubs, or it may have been done with a drum machine. In those cases, there are often more things going on than I can play without practice. In such situations, I have to be creative in order to duplicate what's on the recording. The song "Never There" by Cake is a good example. I believe it was recorded using a drum machine, and the hi-hat part is a little tricky against what's being played on the kick. That takes some concentration to execute live.

> Bands who record their own CDs spent a great deal of time coming up with parts. Try to respect that effort.

What To Listen For

The first thing I listen for when studying a song is the groove. What's the kick pattern? Is the snare drum strictly on 2 and 4, or are there some ghost notes mixed in there? Does the groove change from one section of the tune to another? Is the drummer playing hi-hat during the verses and the ride cymbal through the bridge, or the other way around? What's the feel of the song? Is it a straight-8th or triplet feel?

Once I figure out what the groove is, I listen for the form. Is it AABA, ABA, or a blues tune with twelve-bar phrases? Listening closely to every nuance of the tune is essential.

Fills

When I first joined this band, my bandmates wanted me to play every drum part verbatim, right down to the exact drum fills. I have to admit to having mixed feelings about that. Basically, I believe that strict duplication of fills is sometimes necessary, and sometimes not.

I know what you're thinking. If you play the original fills off the record—even only some of the time—when do you ever get a chance to be creative? I think the creativity comes largely in the process of deciding whether or not to cop the fill exactly.

To help me make that decision, I try to determine if the fills were actually thought of in advance of the recording—composed, if you will. A good hint whether this is the case is if the exact fill is continually in particular sections throughout the song. If I feel the fills were composed as an integral part of the song, I'll usually try to nail them note for note.

In some cases, even fills that were originally improvised later become signature elements of their songs. Think of "In The Air Tonight" by Phil Collins, or Bonham's entrance to "Stairway To Heaven." If those fills aren't played exactly like the record, the audience is likely to notice it.

Another approach is to do your best to capture the flavor of the drummer's fills, if not the exact notes. This works best when you're trying to copy someone like Carter Beauford. A lot of the things Carter plays are clearly improvised and difficult to capture. He uses a large kit with Jam Blocks and other accessory items, and he's a very gifted player with a unique style. On tunes

like "What Would You Say," I simply try to come as close as I can. After all, who knows better than I do what I can and cannot play?

The third approach is to just go with your own fills. Sometimes we'll create medleys, or our own special arrangements of certain songs. We do a medley of Paul Simon's "Me And Julio..." and "Cecilia" in which I invented my own fills (and created my own groove, as well). In these cases, I try to fit the fill to the style of the arrangement. Also, some songs that are played over and over—because they're popular with audiences—tend to take on a life of their own. Over time they gradually morph into original arrangements unique to your band.

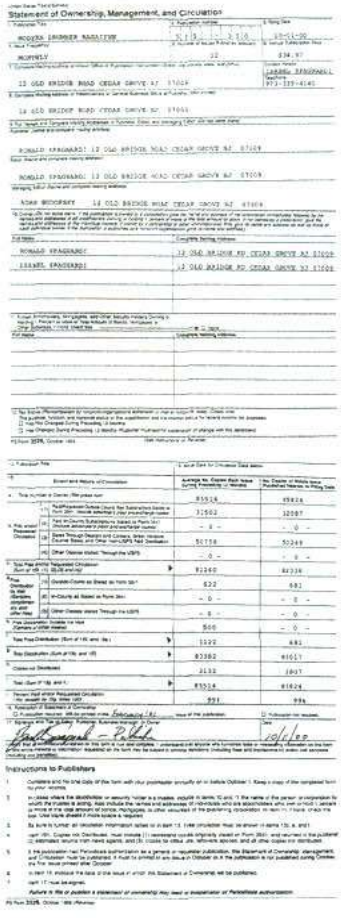
I also feel you can do your own version of another drummer's fill and still come close enough. Embellishment is okay, as long as you don't let it get out of hand. I'll often add flams or ruffs, but I always strive to keep the flavor of what was originally played. Being creative doesn't necessarily mean playing every lick you know, or playing the latest double-bass figure in the smallest amount of space. It means keeping the song in mind and finding something that will fit and complement the music.

Playing For The Music

Keep in mind that bands who record their own CDs spend a great deal of time coming up with individual parts, including the drum parts. Try to respect that effort. You should also appreciate the music you're playing, and have respect for it. If you don't like pop music, then you probably shouldn't be playing in a cover band.

Finally, remember that it's your job to keep time, lay down a solid foundation, and hold it all together. If you throw in a lot of unnecessary stuff, you could affect the feel and the groove in a negative way. When you overplay, you're being egotistical. Always focus on playing for the music, and you'll always find work.

Cover bands are basically dance bands, so the audience needs to feel good, solid time. In all the years I've played in this idiom, I've hardly ever soloed. That's okay; I save my solos for other musical situations. The point is, I don't get paid to solo. I get paid to groove. If you approach your cover-band efforts the same way, you're sure to be successful.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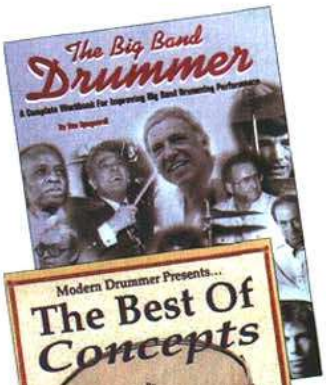

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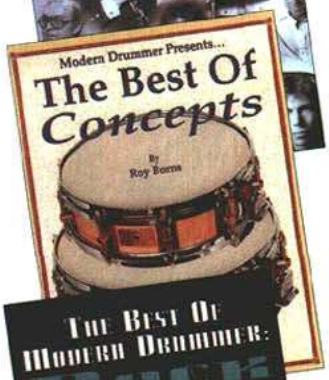

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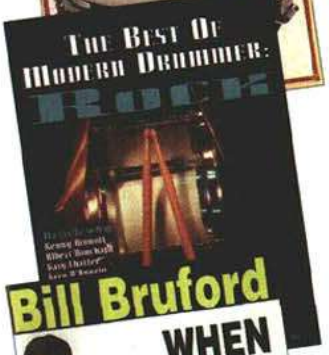

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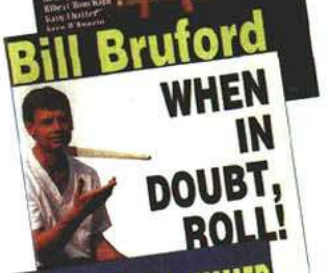

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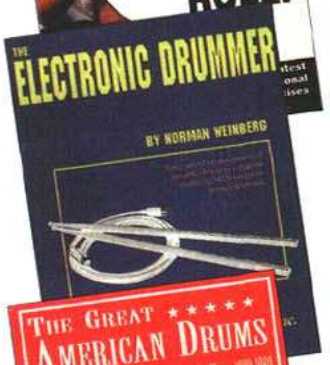

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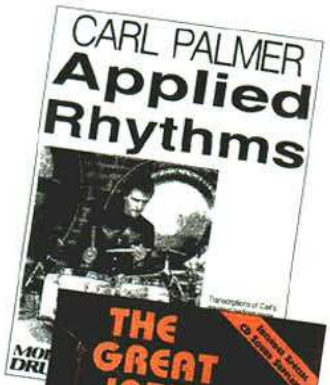

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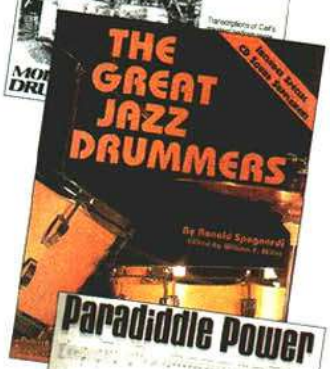

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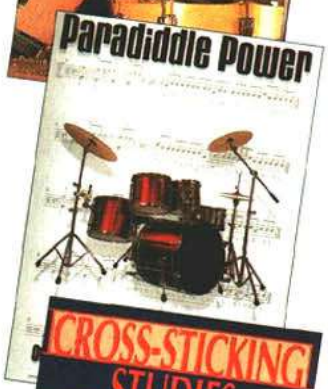

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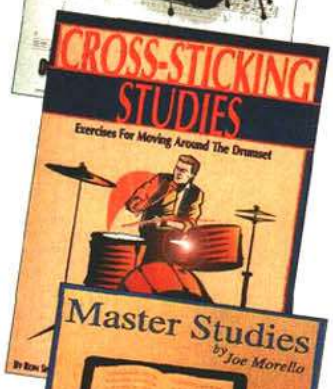

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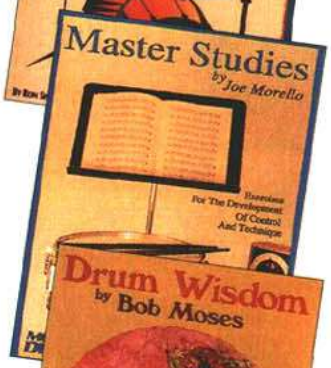

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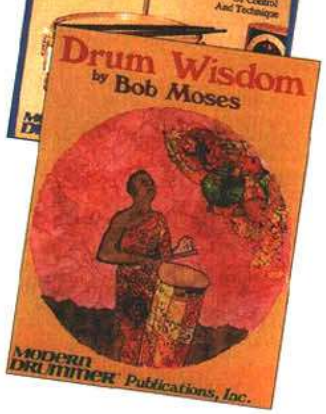

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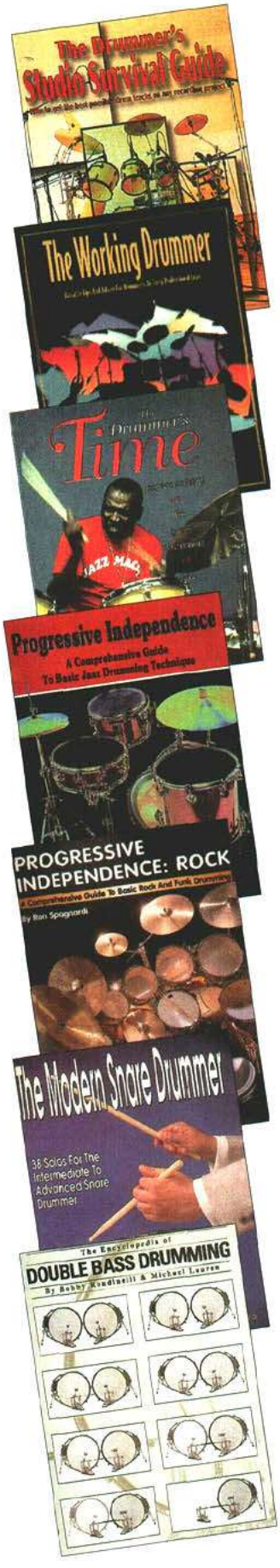

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Positioning For Better Performance

by Tim Earle

Take a look at any of today's great drummers, like, Carter Beauford, Vinnie Colaiuta, Jon Fishman, or Chad Smith. Notice how relaxed and in control they are. Their movements are very natural, and their drums seem to be a natural extension of their bodies. No movement is uncomfortable or awkward.

Of course, years spent working on proper technique certainly contributes to these great players' ease behind the kit. But you can bet they've each spent serious time examining how the positioning of their drums affects their ability to play whatever comes into their heads. Even if you're not quite the monster players these gentlemen are, examining and adjusting your drumkit can result in immediate improvements in your drumming abilities.

Drum Throne Height

The height or your throne determines your posture, balance, and playing power. Try placing the throne at a height so that your thighs are parallel to the ground, with your feet flat if you play heel down, or up on the ball of your foot if you play heel up. Use this as a starting point, and then adjust the throne up or down slightly depending on what feels comfortable to you.

Bear in mind that sitting too much lower than this will cause your thighs to raise. This can have two adverse effects: One is fatigue, since you'll need to lift your thigh above the horizontal plane to play a stroke. The second is loss of center of balance. Your body will bob around when both feet are off the floor.

Try sitting just above the horizontal at the point where the seat is just beginning to push you up. This way you are slightly hanging off the seat, and when you play a stroke you don't waste energy lifting the leg up. All of your energy is converted into a downward motion.

Pedal Positioning

Once you've set the throne at a suitable height, consider where you sit in relation to the pedals. Start by positioning your ankle slightly in front of your knee. The ankle should be free to pivot. Also consider the angle at which your foot rests on the footboard. When you relax your leg and let your whole foot rest on the footboard, your foot should remain in line with the pedal. When you sit so that your foot is fully in line with the footboard, all the energy goes in a straight line and no energy is wasted.

Here's a tip: Position your throne so that the center tom support pole is roughly in line with the center of the pedal footboard. You should be sitting at approximately a 45° angle to the bass drum. Position the hi-hat pedal using the same approach.

Also consider the height of your bass drum. Setting your bass drum with the front rim flat on the floor results in the beater hitting the head at an angle. Adjusting the bass drum legs so that the front of the drum is one or two inches off the floor ensures that the beater will rest flatter on the head, offering better contact, feel, and sound.

Snare Drum

For most prolonged activity, the elbow functions best when bent at approximately a 90° angle. Hold the sticks with your shoulders relaxed and your arms slightly away from your side. Raise your forearms to create a 90° angle. This should feel natural and comfortable, and indicates the height and angle at which your snare drum should be positioned. Adjust your snare stand so that the tips of your sticks naturally rest at the center of the drumhead. Adjust the snare so that the surface is parallel to the angle of the sticks.

To position the snare between your legs so that it corresponds with the sticks, start with your feet on both pedals. Holding the sticks in the playing position, move the snare drum so that the center of the drum corresponds to the tips of the sticks. Remember to relax the shoulders and avoid twisting your body to the left or right. The center of the snare drum (where the tips of the sticks rest) should be in line with the center of your body.

Tom-Toms

It's necessary to lift the arms to reach the toms, so tom angle is quite important. However, it's also important not to lift the arms any higher than necessary.

Once you've decided how high to set

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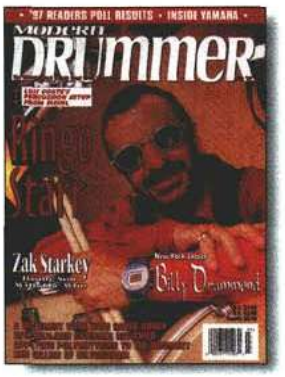

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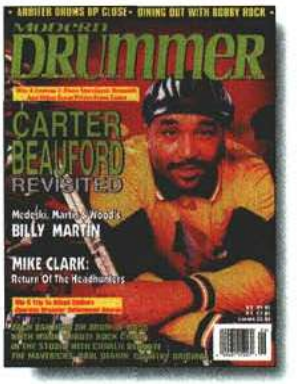

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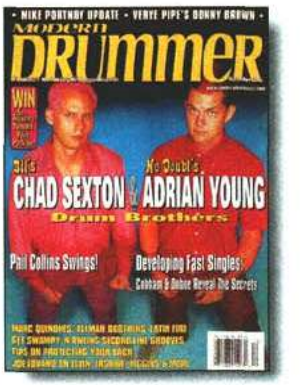

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Caring For Your Set

One of the most important steps to follow after you've bought your set is to clean and protect it. The following steps will work for covered or lacquered drums. First, you'll need a paste wax (preferably a good car wax) and a soft buffing rag. The best rags are old cotton T-shirts without buttons or zippers, which could scratch the drums' surface. You'll also need some window cleaner, more clean rags, and some axle grease.

Start with the largest drum you have. Remove both rims and heads and check for loose or damaged hardware. Begin by applying wax to a small area, usually between three sets of lugs at a time, making sure you get the lugs also. Then wipe off the wax and buff to a high gloss. Remember to wax the bearing edge of the drums as well. Now check for scratches. Most minor surface scratches can be buffed out. The wax also helps to prevent scratches on your drums outer coating, and helps protect them from humidity and water (except of course, for extreme conditions like basement flooding).

Next, clean each drumhead with a good window cleaner. Then wax the inside rims of the heads in the same manner as the drum.

After removing all of the lug bolts, clean each bolt by rubbing the threads with a rag to remove as much of the dirt as possible. Then apply a bit of axle grease. (Axle grease doesn't attract as much dirt as Vaseline and it lasts longer.) The easiest way to apply axle grease to lug bolts is to fill a small container (like a 35mm film canister) and dip them individually. After applying the grease to each lug and inserting the lugs back through the drum rims, place the heads back on the drum and tension them.

For cymbals, be very careful not to use an abrasive cleaner. Otherwise you stand a good chance of ruining the cymbal. I prefer a fine powder-type cleaner that you sprinkle on after wetting the cymbal. (There are several brands available from most drum shops.) With a very damp cloth and light pressure, wipe around the cymbal until clean, being sure not to press too hard or rub against the tonal grooves. Then rinse and dry the cymbal. (Several spray-on cymbal cleaners have also been reviewed favorably in *MD.)*

Finally, protect your drums with cases. I put carpet padding inside my fiber cases. The drums fit snugly and get double the protection a fiber case alone provides. It increases the weight of the case a bit, but I rest easy knowing my drums are better protected.

Follow these simple instructions and you'll get years of trouble-free performance from your equipment. You'll also have a set that looks brand-new all the time! • **Paul Ritchey**

your toms, adjust their angle, using the same technique as for the snare drum. To find the most natural position for your toms, hold the sticks in the playing position at the snare drum, and slide your arms forward and upward slightly. Do not twist to the right or the left. This movement should be very natural. Setting the small tom to correspond to this position will make moving between the snare and small tom fairly effortless.

To position the next rack tom, hold the sticks in the playing position over the small tom and rotate your body to the right without dramatically twisting. When positioning your floor tom, rotate your body to the right and then relax the shoulders. Position the floor tom so that the tips of the sticks rest naturally at the center of the head.

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Because it's necessary to twist slightly to play the floor tom, the height of the drum will probably be slightly lower than the snare drum.

Hi-Hat

We play the hi-hat in several different ways. We play on top with the sticks, and on the edge with the shoulders of the sticks. We play intricate patterns using the shoulder and tip, and we also slam into the half-open hi-hat for rock. Therefore, we need to set the hi-hat to accommodate all of these different techniques. Setting it too high will make intricate patterns difficult. Setting it too low will make it hard to slam into consistently.

With the hi-hats at the lowest point on the stand, turn as though you were going to play the hi-hat with both sticks. Be sure your shoulders are relaxed and your upper arms are slightly away from your sides. Then proceed to raise the hi-hats up to this height.

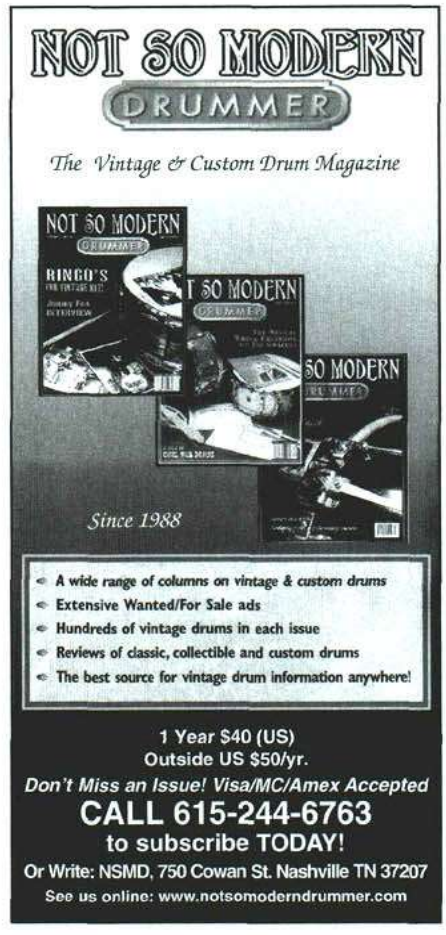
Cymbals

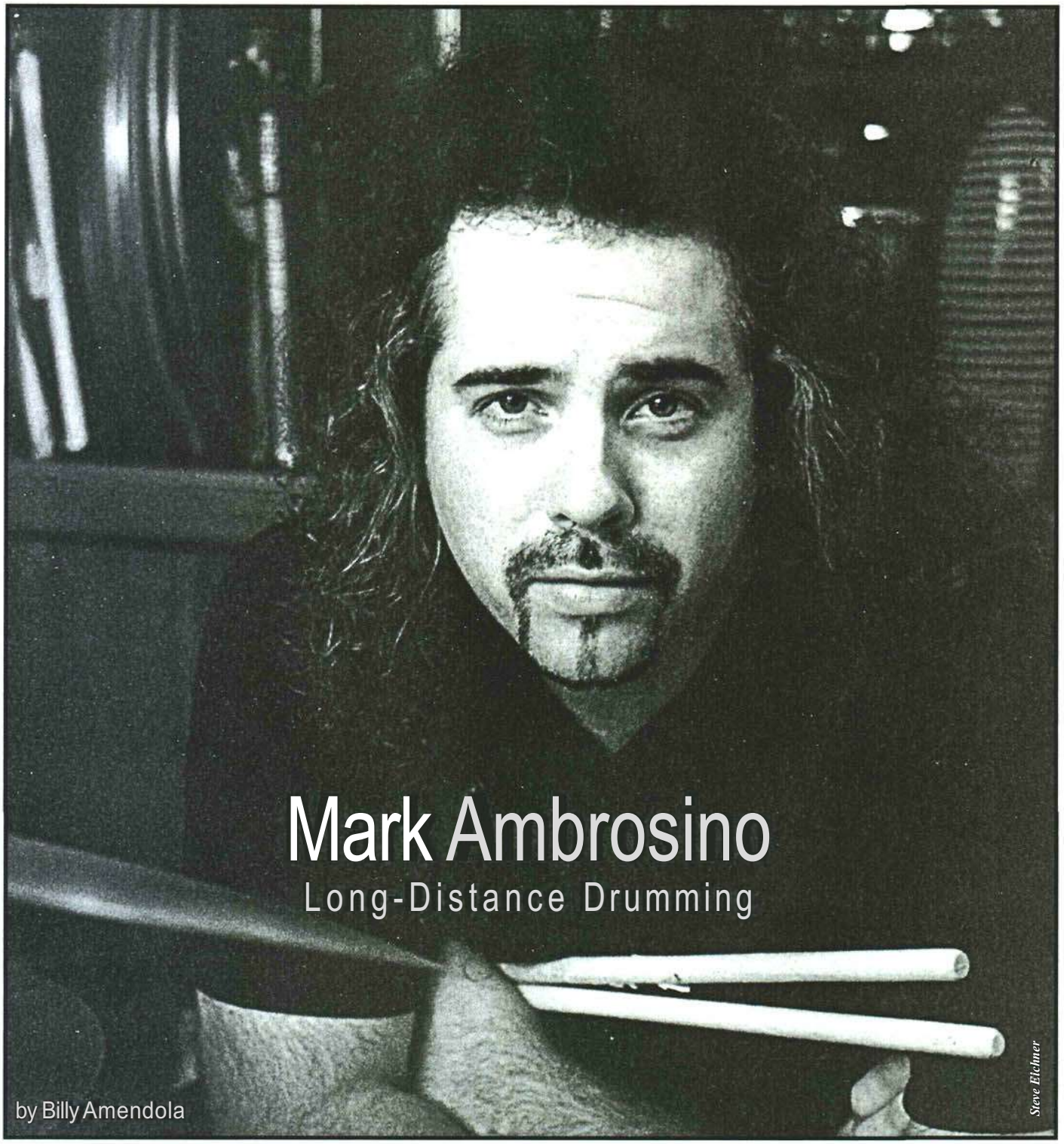
We tend to play the ride cymbal for long periods of time on both the bow and the bell. Extend your arm out toward the ride cymbal and take note of the height of the stick. Bring the ride up to this height and set the angle to correspond to the stick. The arm should rest quite comfortably in this position.

It's essential to be able to move easily between drums and cymbals. To this end, crash cymbals should not be set much above eye-level. Bear in mind that the higher your crash cymbals are, the more you'll need to angle them towards you. Setting them slightly lower will allow you to position them flatter and still be able to play each cymbal comfortably.

As with everything else in drumming, it's important to find what works best for you.

As with everything else in drumming, it's important to find what works best for you. Use these principles as a basis for your own approach. Hopefully, the information here will enhance your playing and help you to be more comfortable, relaxed, and in control.





Mark Ambrosino

Long-Distance Drumming

by Billy Amendola

Steve Eichner

When Alexander Graham Bell made it possible for people to talk to each other from miles away, did he ever envision how important the telephone would be a hundred-plus years down the line? Can you imagine life without a telephone? Without your cell phones? Without Internet connections? As musicians, we all know what it's like waiting for the telephone to ring with that next great gig offer. You know, the call that just might be the *one*.

New York session drummer Mark Ambrosino can not only take that call, he can use it to begin—and even complete—a recording session by the time he hangs up. Mark's company, Global Groove, uses ISDN technology to transmit live drums

Steve Eichner

and percussion performances at any time to anywhere on the planet through those telephone lines, without ever leaving his home.

Check this out: You're sitting in your home studio in New York. "Ralph" the record producer calls you from Los Angeles (or even Australia). He needs you to play on his next big project. Instead of packing and calling to reserve flights and a hotel fast, you go down to your home studio. (You can even stay in your pajamas.) Using your telephone connection, you transmit your performance to the client's location, recording in real time to a SMPTE track or to pre-recorded tracks,

just as if you had flown there and set up your gear. You can even talk to each other throughout the session.

And YOU Thought The Jetsons Was Just A Cartoon

Let's rewind a bit. Recording this way is not entirely new. Some of the vocal recordings for Frank Sinatra's *Duets* CD were done this way back in 1994. And for years a number of jingle houses have been set up with ISDN lines for recording voice-overs. Mark Ambrosino, who operates his own M.A.D.H.O.U.S.E. recording studio in Elmont, New York, has used this method to record drum and music tracks for almost five years. His projects include jingles, movie soundtracks, and albums recorded all over the world. Listening to some of those, you'd never know that Mark never left his own studio.

So how does it work? I went out to Mark's studio to find out. I even took Butch Jones, a famous engineer buddy of mine, along for our ride into the future. Mark laid it all out for us, step by step.

"Sometimes the session is pre-arranged, sometimes it's set up on the fly," Mark explains. "Either way, we work out all the details during a regular telephone call. If you have a chart, you fax it to me. I look it over, and we work out any problems. When we're ready to record, we go online—telephone line, that is. You don't need a computer for this. What you do need is a codec box, which is a very advanced AD (analog/digital) converter. Both parties need one of these, which cost about $10,000 each. It's what makes it all work.

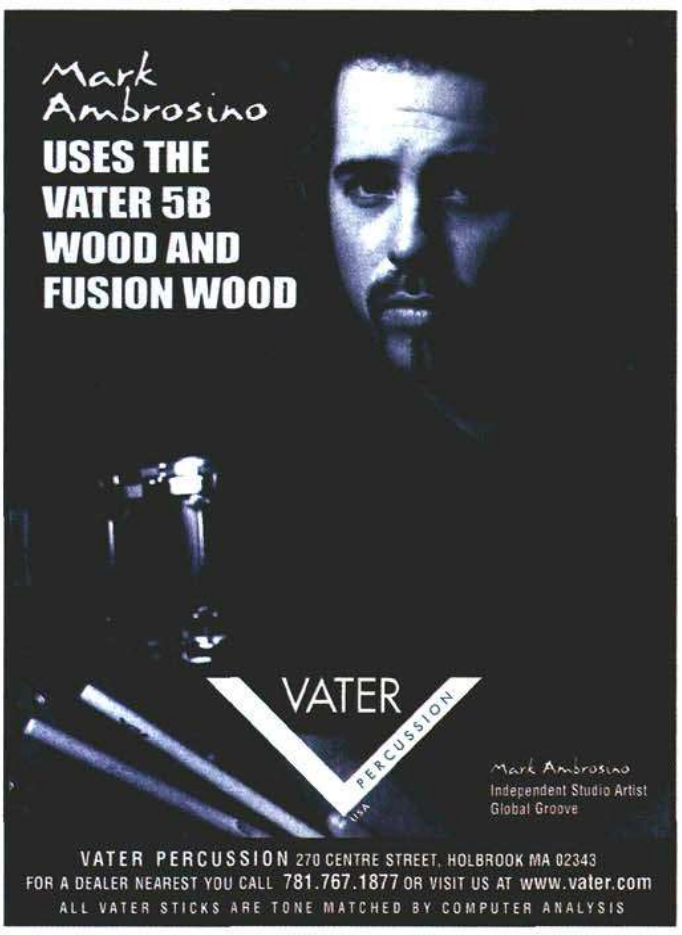
"Then, when we're ready to record, you call on my ISDN lines," Mark continues. "I have two lines on each of three boxes, so I have a total of six lines. Once we're hooked up, we communicate through our talk-back mic's."

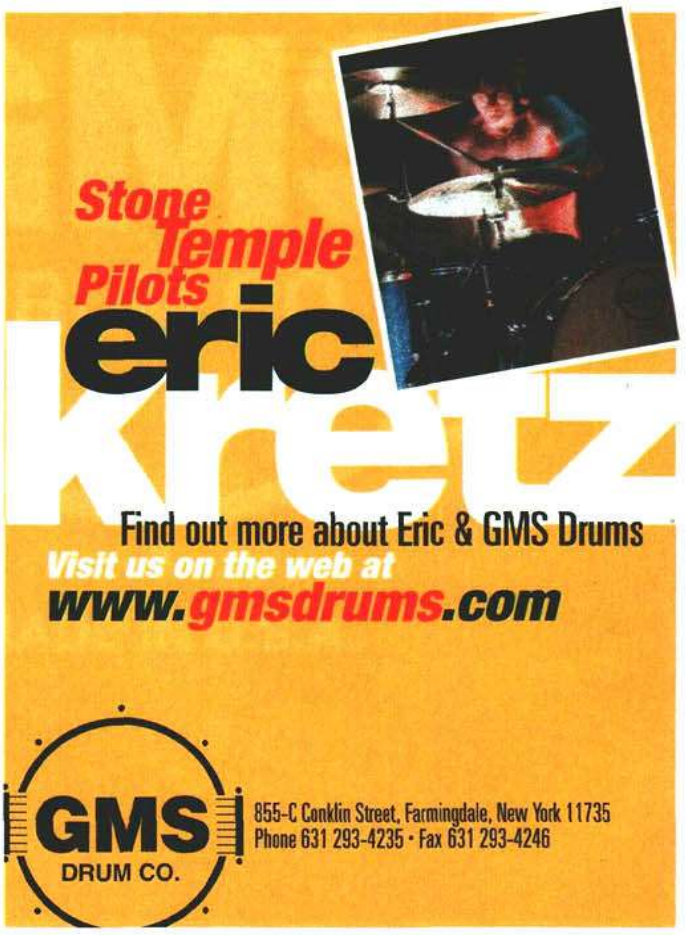
Because signals take time to travel over phone lines, there is some lag time when recording this way. "When I first started," Mark explains, "that lag used to make me nuts. The client would send me a stereo feed—bass track or whatever—and I'd play along to that. I found out that I could be up to two beats late. I think the delay is a half-second tor every six hundred miles. From my studio to Chicago, Boston, or DC, I'm good. Further west, and it gets a little weird. My solution was to tell them not to listen to what they were sending me. Instead, listen to what I send back to them, which is the original track along with me playing. That signal is all leaving here at the same time. They monitor that re-sent signal, not the initial send. If they look at their tape machine they might see a delay, but they won't hear it."

Bringing The World Closer Than We Ever Imagined

This technology is ideal for jingles. In an advertising situation, an agency calls up from London and says they have a shaker on a track, but they want a tambourine instead—right away, literally while the client is there. A system like Mark's can give it to them.

"The beauty of this approach," says Mark, "is the choices it gives both me and the client. While I'm playing, the people who are paying for this can say, Yes, No, or Let's try a different tambourine. Or I





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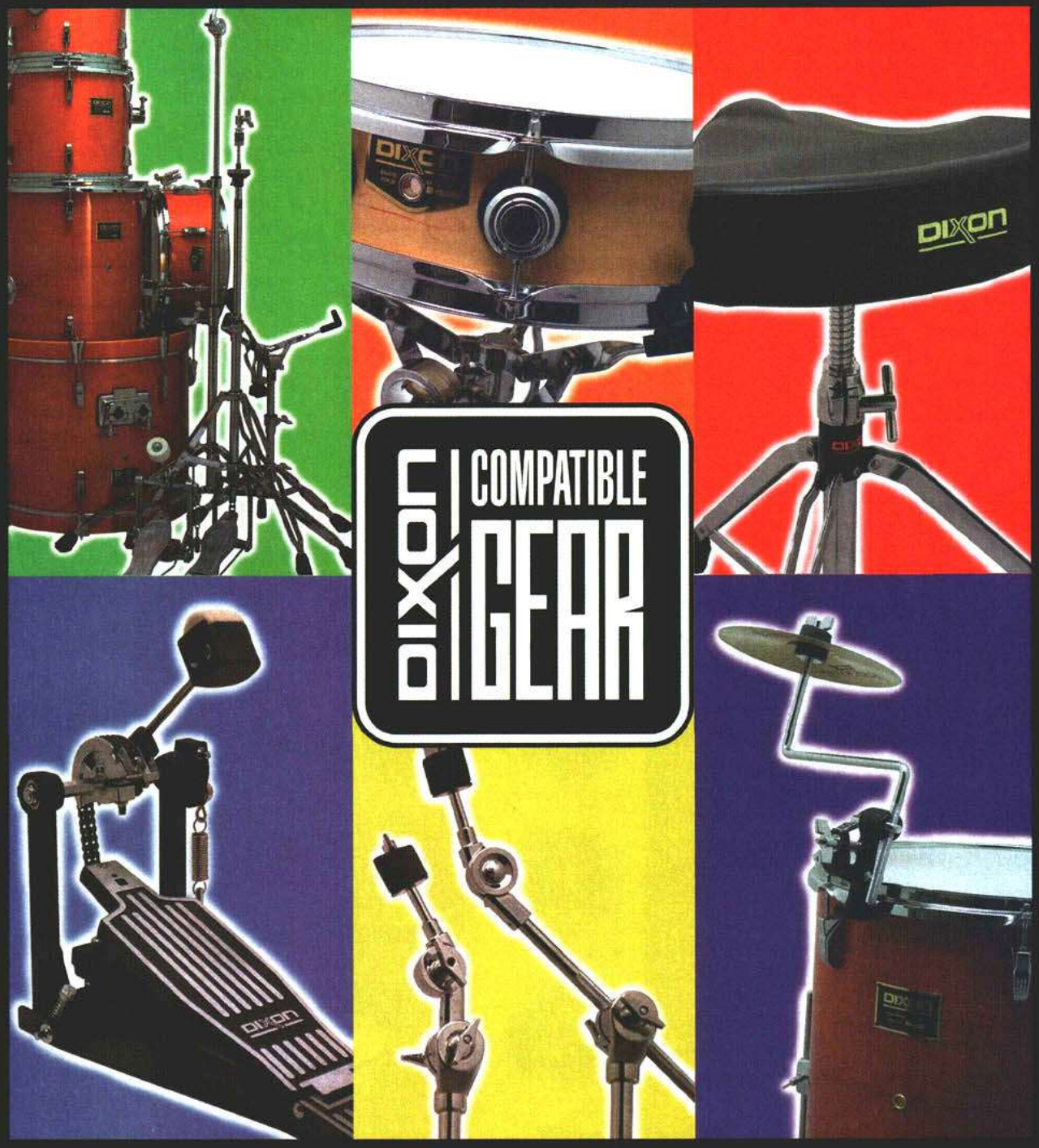

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may suggest trying a djembe. They may not even know what a djembe is, but I can give them the option, just as if I were physically there.

"Besides, if I *was* physically at the session," Mark adds, "I may have only one shaker or one tambourine. By doing it over the telephone lines, I can go into the next room and pull out way more gear than I could ever carry to a session halfway around the world. When I go to sessions, I may have two or three snare drums. Here I can try twenty different ones.

"I have two or three kits all set up, miked, and ready to go," Mark elaborates. "The same goes with cymbals. And when the client doesn't see the sound source, he's really concentrating only on what he hears. There's no visual involved. I can be hitting a dog dish on the other side—and it's okay, because sometimes that's what works."

A video feed can be set up if needed. But that would take the fun out of recording in the nude. Well, then again, maybe not.

You might be thinking, This is all great if it's a two-track stereo mix. But how does the client get separate drum tracks for mixing later?

"Most people do want the drums isolated," Mark admits. "I had to think of a way to get around that. Here's the routing. You're sending a stereo mix to me. I'm listening. You're not monitoring your two mixes; you're monitoring my two mixes back to you, which I can split. I can pan your mix right and the drums left. True, that's only one or two tracks of drums, but here's the key: I'm recording my performance, isolated here in my studio, on 2" tape, ADATs, Pro Tools, or whatever. If you like what we've got after the session is done, I put my machines on external sync.

"Now, from Australia or wherever, through SMPTE, you can rewind and say, 'I want kick and snare.' Boom, I give you kick and snare. 'I want tom one or tom two.' Done. Because of the SMPTE, you've got full lock-up. So now, you have your eight/twelve/sixteen tracks isolated.

"When I record," Mark says, "I try to get the best dry drum sound I can, using compressors on multi-track tape. Then clients can do what they want in the mix later. Some people just want isolated kick and snare, and the rest stereo. I can give them anything they want. I archive everything, so if someone calls back the next day or next week, I have everything logged. This took some time to set up, but I figured it out."

When Mark works, he's like a mad scientist in a lab. He sprints from the control room to the studio and back. He knows his setup so well that he prefers to work alone most of the time—setting up, engineering, and playing. And he does it all very well. "Sometimes when I'm working alone it can get spooky," Mark says. "I'm behind the kit here, while someone is in London working the tape machine. It gets wild. I may say, 'I can't hear enough bass.' They turn up the knob in London, and in my headphones the bass goes up."

So how many studios are equipped with this hook-up? "Well, it can get costly," says Mark, "so it's not for the hobbyist

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with a home studio." Mark's studio, although in a home, is a state-of-the-art facility. Mark explains that most major studios are hooked up.

Making Music Through The Phone Lines

With the cost of telephone calls, Mark's system sounds expensive. "But if they want that New York vibe," he insists, "it's still cheaper than flying me out and putting me up. It really doesn't take that much time. To begin with, you can call me on a very low bandwidth line, which is enough for us to rehearse over. When we're ready to record, then you can call all six lines. Then we go to full bandwidth for maybe ten minutes, while I do that one take. Jingles are short pieces. Albums or movie soundtracks, of course, will take longer."

Let's not forget that even with all this great technology, everything still comes down to performance. The title "session musician" is thrown around a lot in our business, but Mark Ambrosino rightfully deserves it. He has toured or recorded with Michael Bolton, Perry Farrell, Whitney Houston, Ray Charles, Stevie Wonder, James Ingram, Dionne Warwick, Patti LaBelle, Patti Austin, Marc Anthony, Olivia Newton John, Michael Brecker, Chaka Khan, Debbie Gibson, Aretha Franklin, Smokey Robinson, The Temptations, and The Four Tops. He's done countless jingles, along with television and film work. Now thirty-two, Mark has been playing professionally since the age of ten. He has studied at the Manhattan School Of Music and at the Juilliard Conservatory.

Mark is also a member of his own band, Soulfarm. Their recent CD, *Live At Wetlands,* has a world music/jam band vibe to it. "There's a lot of space in the music," says Mark, "so it gives me room to play." When Mark—who endorses GMS drums, Vater drumsticks, Aquarian drumheads, Rhythm Tech percussion, and Joe Meek and ART recording equipment—started Global Groove five years ago, he was doing two sessions a month. Now he does anywhere from four to five a week.

"I started Global Groove to give smaller recording facilities the advantage of recording live drums in settings they may not be accustomed to," Mark explains. "By the time I started this company, I'd missed the heyday of recording sessions. Back in the day, there were a lot more live sessions. I'm using current technology to get things back in that mode again. Now I do a lot of sessions right here in New York City. Many New York jingle houses are not equipped with big rooms for live drums. They may be set up with just a computer and a mixing board. They don't want to deal with setting up drums or mic's, even if they could. So they call me, and I'll do six jingles in about an hour."

Many of Mark's clients are repeat customers. In fact, he's so confident that this recording process will keep them coming back, he offers the first session free. As he puts it, "Everyone is skeptical at first about all this new technology. Come check it out, see if it's for you." If you're interested, you can reach Mark at www.globalgroove.org, or by telephone at (212) 255-5080.

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In Memoriam

Winston Grennan

Reggae drummer Winston Grennan died October 27, 2000 in Nantucket, Massachusetts, following a battle with lung cancer. He was fifty-six.

Grennan was an originator of the one-drop rhythm, and he is credited with slowing down the "rock steady" beat to the point where it became reggae as it is known today. He played on many classic albums, including Jimmy Cliff's *The Harder They Come* soundtrack and works by Bob Marley, Toots & The Maytals, and The Paragons. He also recorded with pop, jazz, and R&B artists including Eric Gale, Paul Simon, Garland Jeffries, and Kid Creole & The Coconuts.

Noted reggae guitarist/producer Andy Bassford comments, "Anyone who knows reggae will acknowledge Winston's pioneering contributions to the development of Jamaican music. It is no exaggeration to say that his work significantly affected musicians in many idioms, and that without him the current face of world music would be different."

Winston is survived by his wife Ellie and two small children. Donations may be sent to the Winston Grennan Memorial Fund, PO Box 3094, Nantucket, MA 02584.

William "Porky" Hill

William "Porky" Hill died September 9, 2000, at the age of fifty-one. Porky was nationally known as a live drummer for KC & The Sunshine Band and many other acts. He had been the drummer for Arkansas-based Cale Brothers Band for the past twelve years. Hill was a shining light of a person, admired not for only his musical skills but also for his kind heart and cheerful demeanor.

Porky endorsed Mapex drums. Josh Touchton, Mapex artist relations director, comments, "I became friends with Porky several years ago, and I had the chance to double-drum with him several times. I always looked up to him for his playing ability and his wonderful spirit. We at Mapex would like to pass along our deepest sympathies to all those who knew and loved Porky."

A memorial fund has been set up for Porky's children. Contributions can be sent to: Porky Hill Children's Memorial Fund, Acct#11521264, McIlory Bank, 75 N. East St., Fayetteville, AR 72701.

Nick Fatool

Big band and studio drummer Nick Fatool died September 26, 2000, following cancer surgery. He was eighty-five.

Fatool came up through the big bands of the late 1930s and '40s, working with several groups. He eventually gravitated toward California, where he became a first-call drummer in the LA studio scene of the 1950s and early '60s. His tom-tom work was featured behind Artie Shaw's hit "Concerto For Clarinet."

Terry Bozzio Meets The Louisville Ballet

When Terry Bozzio received a call asking if he would be interested in collaborating with the Louisville Ballet in a program called Freeform 2000, it was a dream come true for the drummer. "I've always loved the ballet music that Stravinsky wrote," Bozzio says. "The music itself was enough to knock me off my feet. But then there are all the visual elements and the choreography. I've always wanted to do something that would add a dimension beyond solo drums, so I was pretty excited that this was going to happen."

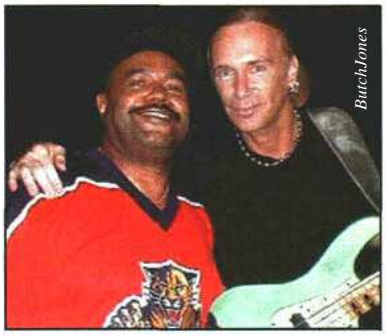
Freeform 2000 began with the dancers performing two choreographed pieces, one of which included music from Bozzio's *Solo Drum Music* CD. "Seeing the dancers interpret my music was a moving experience," says Terry. "To me, the blend of drums and dance is a perfect match." Bozzio then performed three of his solo drum compositions, earning a standing ovation from an audience that included a large percentage of ballet regulars who presumably had never experienced such a performance until that night.

The climax of the evening featured the ballet company and Bozzio performing together, with the dancers improvising to three more of Bozzio's compositions. "We thought we would only have rhythm to inspire us," says Elena Fillmore, the Louisville Ballet member who coached the other dancers in improvisation and choreographed the piece that featured Bozzio's music. "But there were many different textures, colors, moods, and levels beyond the rhythm. Terry even played little melodies that we could pick up on."

Bozzio hopes that he will be able to do more work with ballet companies in the future. "Drummers appreciate what I do. But a lot of people in the arts market hear 'solo drums' and don't really understand what I'm doing until they see it. So working with a ballet company lends a certain type of credibility to what I do. And it's a win/win situation, because I can attract a different audience to the ballet."

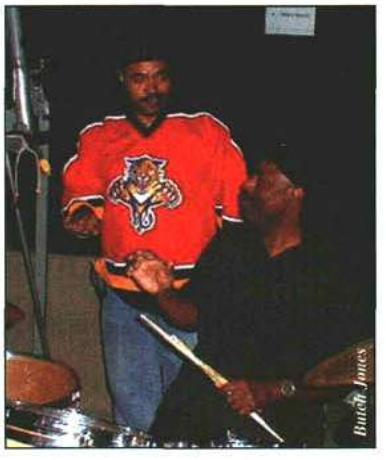
Rick Mattingly

Slammin/Jammin' Bass Day 2000



Dennis Chambers and Billy Sheehan

Shawn Pelton (Will Lee and Billy Sheehan talking in the background)

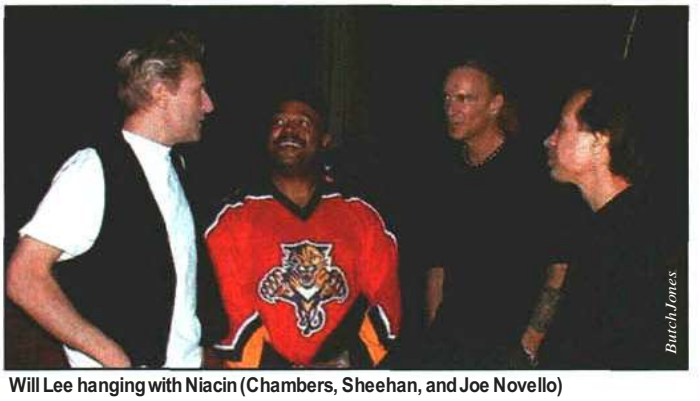


Dennis and Lenny White (backstage)

Bass Collective (sister school to Drummers Collective) held their annual bass celebration at New York City's Manhattan Center on Sunday, October 15, 2000. Presented in association with *Bass Player* magazine, the show was mainly aimed at bass players. But it was equally enjoyable for all musicians—especially drummers.

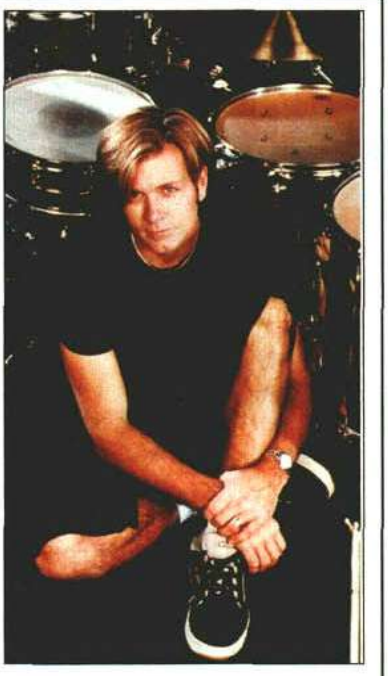
Powerhouse drummer **Dennis Chambers** played three all-star performances without breaking a sweat. He began by blazing through a killer set with Gary Willis and Scott Kinsey. Then he sat in with Percy Heath (who received Bass Player's Lifetime Achievement Award) and Jeb Patton. Later in the day he brought down the house one more time when he performed with Niacin, featuring Mr. Big's Billy Sheehan on bass and John Novello on keyboards.

Bassist Anthony Jackson also presented a Lifetime Achievement Award. This one went to legendary studio bassist Joe Osbourne, who performed a few tunes with a band featuring *Saturday*



Will Lee hanging with Niacin (Chambers, Sheehan, and Joe Novello)

QUICK BEATS: PAT TORPEY
(MR. Big)

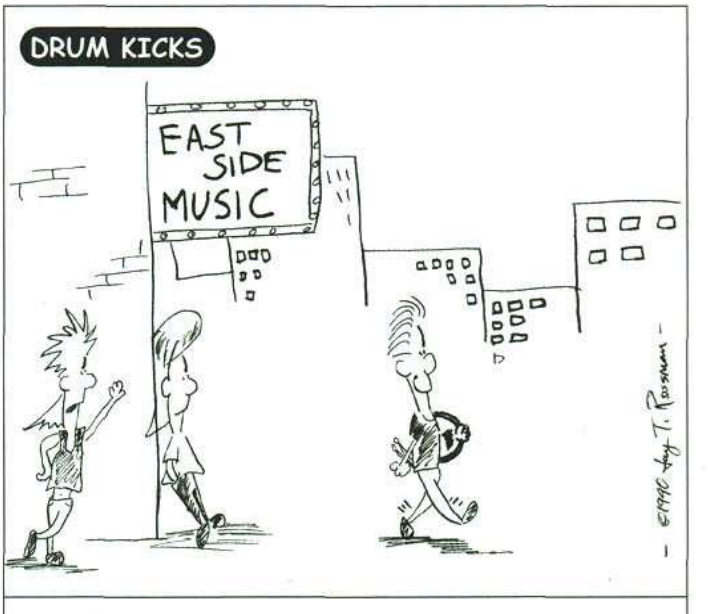


What are some of your favorite recorded grooves by other drummers?
David Garibaldi on Tower Of Power's "Oakland Stroke." The first time I heard it, I couldn't comprehend what was going on. It opened me up to a whole new approach, much different from the standard "rock" thing. From there I went on to devour every Tower Of Power groove. Also, John Bonham on "The Crunge." I saw Zeppelin play this live before I heard the recording. I was hooked on pretty much anything Bonham did.

What are some of your favorite grooves that *you've* recorded?
Mr. Big's "Voodoo Kiss" is one of my favorites. It was the first time I used the heel-toe technique on the hi-hat. "Jane Doe" is me trying to make use of my John Bonham influence, mixing in some funk, and what seems like odd time signatures, although it's not. I also like "Static," which is on our new record, *Get Over It.*

Who are some of your influences?
Led Zeppelin, Jimi Hendrix, and The Beatles influenced me in the beginning. It wasn't just the drumming, but the whole musical picture. Dennis Chambers has some incredible recordings too. His sense of groove is what really floors me. He's very creative, and a great guy.

What ride cymbal are you using at the moment?
A Zildjian 22" Ping ride. I like its versatility. It can really roar, and I can also play it with finesse.



Night Live drummer **Shawn Pelton.** They rocked on "Secret Agent Man," one of the many hits from Joe's session days.

Late Nite's Will Lee (who, besides his stellar bass playing, also has some great vocal chops) performed with Hiram Bullock and drummer **Clint DeGannon.**

The show closed with a rare appearance by multi-talented bassist Marcus Miller. Backing Marcus was legendary drummer **Lenny White,** who was sharing drum duties with **"Li'l John" Roberts.** (Keep an ear out for this guy.) Special thanks to production manager Danett Albetta, Bass Collective's John Castellano, and to *Bass Player* magazine for a great show.

Billy Amendola

Spinal Tap Finds A New Drummer

After a grueling search, heavy metal legends Spinal Tap recently revealed the identity of their new drummer. Sam Smales, a thirty-five-year-old toilet-paper salesman from Westerville, Ohio, beat out a handful of applicants to win the dubious honor of banging the skins for the legendary rock group. The new drummer's family immediately took out additional life insurance on him.

Listen.com and *Rolling Stone* promoted the contest. Contestants were required to submit a fifty-word essay on why they should be the new drummer, along with a photo or video of themselves. Spinal Tap bassist Derek Smalls, *Rolling Stone* editor David Wild, and Listen.com editor Jon Pruett judged the entries.

"My name is Smales, not Smalls," noted Smales in his winning essay. "Smales/Smalls are derivations of the Welsh name Small, which explains our cucumbers. You need 'family' in a band, and my great uncle's third cousin's brother's nephew is Derek Smalls. Furthermore, I will be the first toilet-paper salesman turned drummer for Spinal Tap."

Smales recently won an award for "excellence in toilet-paper sales." The Spinal Tap judges unanimously agreed that this experience at sudden-found fame would greatly assist Smales after becoming an overnight rock star.

Pearl Supports Honduran Orphanage

The Pearl Corporation, with help from the Drum Center in Indianapolis, Indiana, has donated a complete five-piece Pearl Forum drumkit to the Orphanage Emmanuel in Honduras. Local Indianapolis resident Ron Benefield will be moving to Honduras in January, 2001 to be the director of music and multimedia at

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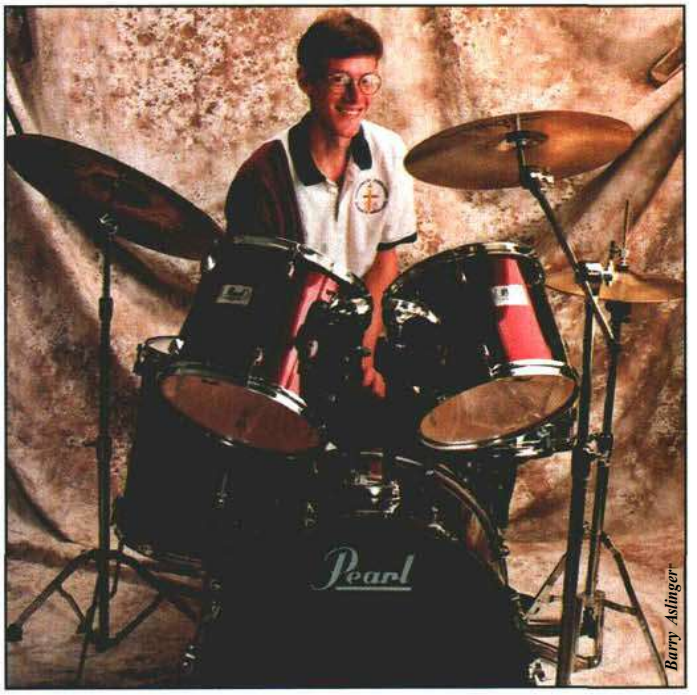

Ron Benefield with the Forum drumkit donated by Pearl to the Orphanage Emmanuel in Honduras

the Christian mission, and he will be playing drums and giving lessons to the children living there. Harry Cangany at the Drum Center heard of this cause, and worked with Doug Smith at Pearl to provide the drumkit.

LP Backs Thelonious Monk Competition

Contest winner Pedro Martinez (left) of Cuba participated in an all-star jam with several of the judges, including Giovanni Hidalgo.

LP Music Group was a supporter of this year's fourteenth annual Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition, held September 9-10 at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC. The competition showcases a different instrument every year. For the first time ever, this year the focus was on Afro-Latin Hand Drumming.

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$60,000 in scholarships and prizes, and for the chance to launch a recording career on a major jazz label. LP congas, bongos, and toys were used throughout the competition.

Semi-finalists performed a fifteen-minute program before a distinguished panel of judges, including three of LP's premiere endorsers—Giovanni Hidalgo, Candido Camero, and Milton Cardona. Other judges included Ray Barretto, Babatunde Olatunji, and Big Black. LP endorser and bandleader Johnny Almendra was the artistic director of the event, and his group Los Jovenes Del Barrio accompanied the competing percussionists at the event.

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright hosted a reception at the State Department on Sunday evening in honor of the competition, with Honorary Chair (and drummer) Tipper Gore attending and speaking at the evening's festivities.

Indy Quickies

Vic Firth, Inc. is now the manufacturer and exclusive distributor of Tom Gauger concert drumsticks and mallets. Tom Gauger has over thirty years of experience as a performer and teacher, including many years as percussionist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Each product in the line has been developed on the job and for the job. "We look forward to Tom's ongoing involvement in the manufacturing process and in new product development," commented Vic Firth.

On October 19, 2000, **Berklee College of Music** presented the first annual Terri Lyne Carrington Endowed Scholarship. Named for the drummer and 1983 Berklee graduate, the award is specifically for a female instrumental student. It was presented this year to pianist and performance major Daniela Schachter (class of 2002). The presentation included a concert with performances by Terri Lyne, Daniela, and an all-star Berklee student scholarship band.

The Terri Lyne Carrington Endowed Scholarship was established through a gift from the **Avedis Zildjian** company, with whom Terri Lyne has had a long-time association. It was presented by Zildjian president and Berklee trustee Craigie Zildjian.

Aquarian recently launched their new Web site, which can be found at www.aquariandrumheads.com. According to owner Roy Burns, "The site is packed with clear and concise product information. It also has many helpful tips for drummers on drumhead selection, tuning, and much more." The site will also feature a reprise of Roy Burns' *Concepts* articles originally published in *MD*. A different article will be featured each month.

ProMusicFind.com has acquired **MusiclSearch,** the second largest Web site for listing the inventories of record and CD dealers and collectors. ProMusicFind.com is a worldwide virtual marketplace, with a database of over six million items and nearly two hundred dealers. Merchandise includes new, used, rare, and collectible instruments, sheet music, music videos, books, CDs, DVDs, laser discs, vinyl, memorabilia, and other music-related products.

John Ferrante is the new artist relations manager for **D'Addario,** parent company of **Evans Drumheads.** John will run D'Addario's Studio West, assisting Evans artists at the studio and on location at performances, studio dates, and clinics.

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Jon Cohan

What are some of your favorite recorded grooves by other drummers?
John Bonham on "D'Yer Maker," "When The Levee Breaks," and "Kashmir" (Led Zeppelin). Mitch Mitchell on "Crosstown Traffic," "If Six Was Nine," and "Fire" (Jimi Hendrix). Keith Moon on "Won't Get Fooled Again," "The Real Me," and "My Generation" (The Who), Ian Paice on "Highway Star," "Lay Down Stay Down," and "Burn" (Deep Purple). And Frank Beard on "La Grange" (ZZ Top). That's a bad-ass shuffle.

What are some of your favorite recorded grooves that *you've* recorded?
The songs on *Blood Sugar Sex Magic* and *Californication.*

What's in your CD player now?
The Who's *Tommy,* Doc Martin (house deejay), D'Angelo's *Voodoo, Queen 2,* Pink Floyd's *The Wall.* I think I'm going through a classic rock phase.

Editor's note: *In order to offer the most timely information, Endorser News and Taking The Stage are now features of Modern Drummer Online: www.moderndrummer.com.*

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CheapBeats Cymbal Barn. Specializing in new and used Zildjian, Sabian, Paiste, others. Buy, sell, trade. Also, Premier drums, name-brand sticks/heads. **Free brochure.** Route 2, Box 340, Charleston, WV 25314. Tel: (304) 744-4858.

Drum Supply House—maple shells, coverings, lugs, and hardware. **Free** Parts Guide for builders! Tel: (901) 423-3786, 47 Ingram St., Jackson, TN 38301. **www.drummaker.com**.

Creative Projects. Pad-1 practice pad (knee pad), The Padd, Dynabee, Meg bags, Imagination Drumset Method. For a free brochure write: Creative Projects, 1281 Ulupii St, Kailua, HI 96734. Tel: (808) 262-2022. Fax: (808) 262-3294. Email: creaproj@aloha.com. Visit Web site: cp.digiweb.com.

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Drummers—Study with Jim Payne in NYC or Westchester. Author of three widely acclaimed instruction books, including Give The Drummers Some. Tel: (914) 232-8075, or www.funkydrummer.com.

Nashville: George Lawrence at Fork's Drum Closet. www.drumguru.com. Tel: (615) 665-2198.

Boston, Brockton, Providence, RI: Horrigan Drum School, all levels. Tel: (888) 258-0021.

Jazz/Creative Drummers: Books keep you stuck in patterns unrelated to spontaneous, creative drumming. Enlightening information. Drummerdon21@cs.com, or Don's Drum Studio, PO Box 41386, Cleveland, OH 44141-0386.

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Any Gretsch, Ludwig, Leedy, Rogers, etc. Also, K Zildjian (Istanbul) and Paiste. Cash or trade. Blair N Drums. Tel: (800) 733-8164, (616) 364-0604, fax: (616) 363-2495.

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Bobby Chiasson's **Jollity Drum Farm** mail-order list includes hundreds of drums, and **Rogers Swiv-O-Matic**. 420 Coach Road, Argyle, NY 12809. Tel: (518) 638-8559, drumfarm@global2000.net, drumfarm.simplenet.com.

A Drummer's Tradition features an incredible collection of vintage drums for sale. Visit our shop in San Rafael, California, or check our Web site at www.adrummerstradition.com for weekly updates. We are always buying! Call 10–6 PST, Mon–Sat. tel: (415) 458-1688, fax: (415) 458-1689.

We have an ear for sound. Blair N Drums, since 1987. We feature8 Vintage Gretsch and K Zildjian. Also, Ludwig, Rogers, Paiste, etc. 3148 Plainfield, N.E., Suite 250, Grand Rapids, MI 49525. Please call only to buy, sell, or trade. Tel: (800) 733-8164, (616) 364-0604, fax: (616) 363-2495.

Vintage: Snares, sets, singles, cymbals, hardware, logos, and trades. Look/see, www.drumatix.com.

Rogers Book! Slingerland Book! Many others, plus calfskin heads, shirts, videos, etc. Rebeats Vintage Drum Products, PO Box 6, 219 Prospect, Alma, MI 48801. Tel: (517) 463-4757. Www.rebeats.com.

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next month

DAVE WECKL
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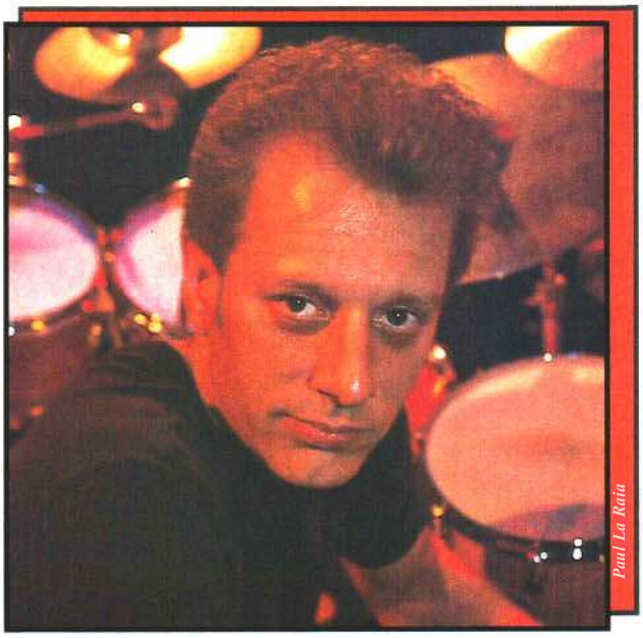
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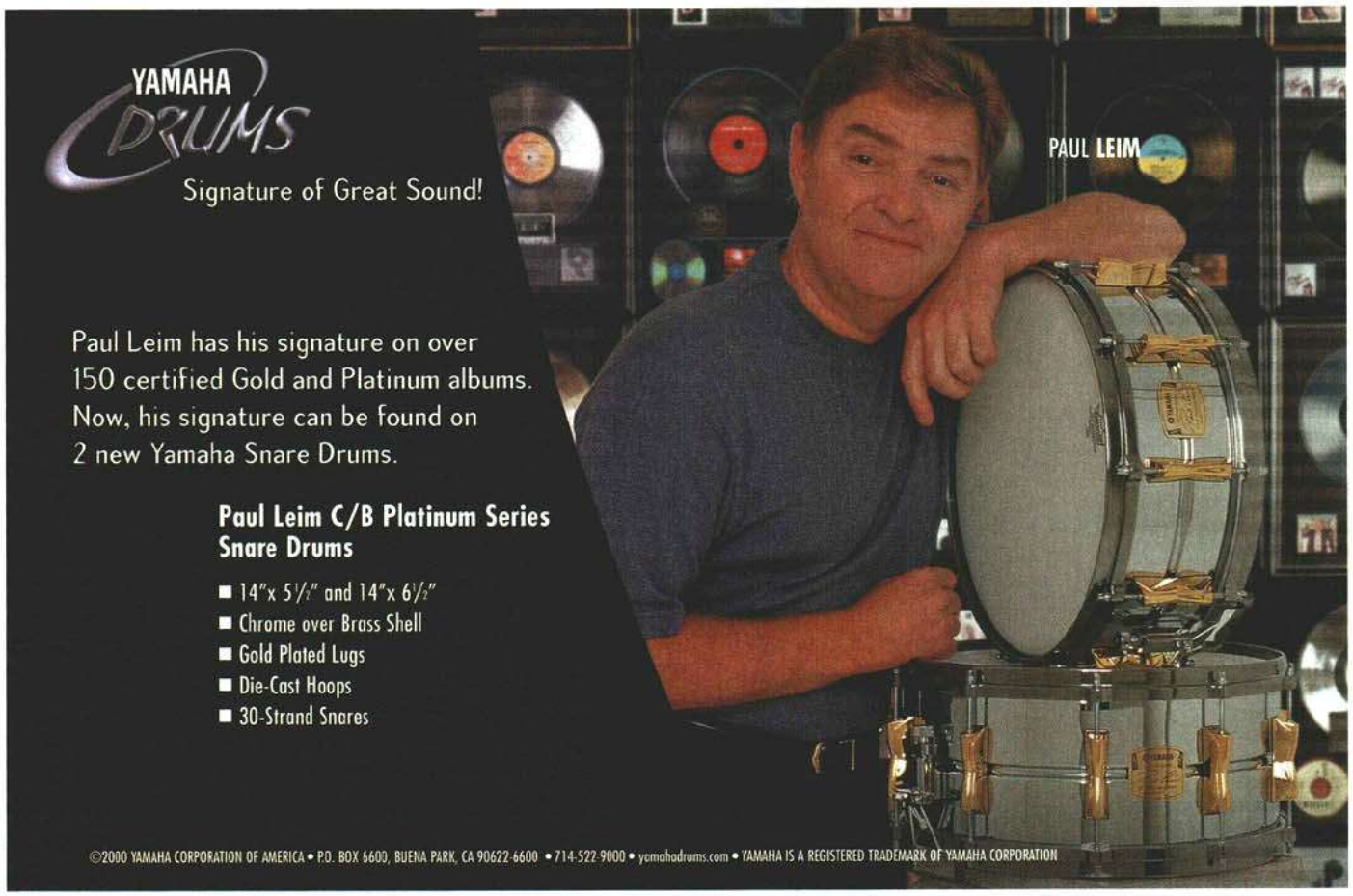

Says John Boyden of Atlanta, Georgia, "I purchased this Ludwig stainless-steel kit new in 1977, after flipping burgers for a year and saving every penny I earned. The kit is a reflection of my influences: Neil Peart (for the 'progressive' setup), Carl Palmer (for the stainless steel), Phil Collins (a fellow lefty), and John Bonham (the original Ludwig stainless-steeler, and because he influenced *everyone.)*"

John later replaced the original Ludwig mounting system with RIMS mounts and a Gibraltar rack. "It added lots of positioning flexibility," says John. "But you think the kit was heavy *before...*" Remo Muff'ls control the ring of the steel shells, all of which are single-headed except for the 18" floor tom. Percussion colors are provided by an extensive array of LP blocks, bells, and tambourines. A battery of Zildjian (and one Wuhan) cymbals completes the kit.

John concludes, "In this age of wonderful, warm, wet, dual-headed drum wonders, I hope you enjoy this look down memory lane...when bombast and bellbottoms were the thing!"

PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

1. Photos must be high-quality and in color. 35mm slides are preferred; color prints will be considered; Polaroids not accepted. 2. You may send more than one view of the kit. 3. Only show drums, no people. 4. Shoot drums against a neutral background. Avoid "busy" backgrounds. *S.* Clearly highlight special attributes of your kit. Send photo(s) to: Drumkit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288. Photos cannot be returned.

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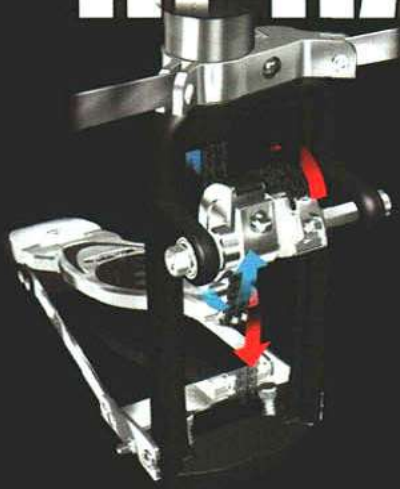
VariSet Footboard Angle Adjustment system allows you to effortlessly rotate the pull cam to change the angle of the footboard. The pedal height can also be adjusted on the pedal cam side to compensate for the difference in footboard heights produced by interchanging the cams.

PosiLink Twin Cam Drive

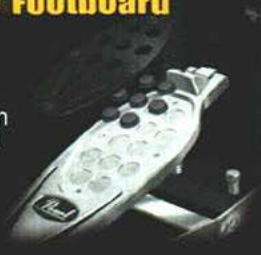


This completely new and exclusive Hi-Hat drive system utilizes two cams and two double link chains, working together, to provide the smoothest, quietest, most natural feeling Hi-Hat action ever imaginable. No other system can provide the extreme torque, natural response and tight, crisp Hi-Hat sound offered by this exciting innovation in Hi-Hat drive design. We've even replaced the normal felt washer on the lower pull rod return with a spring. This helps to further quieten the pedal when removing your foot, and adds greatly to the pedal response while playing.

PowerShifter Function

This revolutionary function allows you to move the footboard to one of three preset positions. This changes the angle of the chain and allows you to adjust the feel and action from a light feel, to one with extreme power and torque.

TractionPlate Footboard



This new concept in footboard design is shared with our Eliminator Bass Drum Pedal and allows you to remove and reconfigure each individual traction grip to suit your exact requirements. The TractionPlate is also reversible allowing you to position the slide or grip of the plate at either the front or rear.

4 Interchangable Cams

You can easily custom tailor the response curve and action of the Eliminator Hi-Hat by choosing between four different Interchangable cam options. From super smooth and natural to radically aggressive, one Hi-Hat now does it all.

SuperGrip Clutch

Our all new SuperGrip Clutch design is the strongest, most dependable system available today. It features a completely solid upper and lower tunnel design with a center gripping hinge to hold your upper Hi-Hat Cymbal securely like no other clutch has ever done before. It also features a new die-cast wingnut designed to allow you to easily and securely tighten the cymbal.

Precision Tension Dial

Eliminators' new Precision Spring Tension Dial is engineered with a multitude of exact steps allowing you to precisely and quickly dial in your optimum tension setting. This innovative system offers a far greater tension range and its exact locked-in steps will not slip or move under stress.

Swiveling Dual-Legs

Eliminators' new Swiveling Dual-Legs allow perfect positioning with Twin Bass Drum Pedals and other accessory pedals while still maintaining a firm, stable stance. The offset post design also provides closer positioning with your snare drum while leaving the pedal in the normal playing position. Our new Rubber Feet offer a simple flipping spike for the ultimate in grip.

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Zildjian Drumsticks

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